ROCK CANDY

FOR THOSE WHO WERE RAISED ON ROCK

June - July 2018

NIKKI SIXX
THE IMPOSTER STORY

KING'S X
THE CRITICS' CHOICE

BLUE ÖYSTER CULT
THE MAKING OF 'MIRRORS'

GOLDEN EARRING
CLASSIC 'MOONTAN' ALBUM REVISITED

NIGHT RANGER
LAST OF THE 'ER' BANDS

DREAM THEATER
'IMAGES AND WORDS' SLEEVE DISSECTED

LITA FORD
TALKING DEEP PURPLE

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STRYPER
OZ FOX'S FIRST GIG

IRON MAIDEN
THE BLAZE BAYLEY YEARS

VAN HALEN
BACKSTAGE MADNESS

KEN HENSLEY
"HEEP PEAKED IN '72"

DONINGTON MONSTERS OF ROCK
THE GLORY YEARS

JAPANESE METAL
SONIC SAMURAIS

KISS

THE SOLO ALBUMS UNCOVERED!

14 PAGES!

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ROCK CANDY

WELCOME

I'VE JUST FINISHED READING a book about record stores that brought back some great memories. The author made much of the fact that these shops were like youth clubs for teenagers bored witless by their lack of social activities, and I vividly remember visiting stores on Saturday mornings and hanging out for hours flicking through the racks, eavesdropping on conversations about bands, and listening to tons of records that I could never actually afford to buy. Shades, the specialist rock and metal store in London, was a prime example. In its 1980s heyday it was populated by anyone interested in the hard rock and metal scene, from London, the Home Counties and beyond. And the amount of overseas accents really blew me away. From Europe to America and even Japan, it seemed that every rock fan in the world had heard about Shades.

THE REASON I mention all this is because my attention has been drawn to a recent report about music sales and how streaming has now become the great white hope for the music business. It also mentioned the fact that major record labels can't wait to stop manufacturing physical product. Of course, that may well suit pop and rap fans, but when it comes to classic rock lovers, the report is way off beam. For us, it's all about rekindling the original experience of holding product in your hands and having the option to proudly line up your rock music or magazine on the shelf to listen to or read later. I pine for the old school days and ways. But what we've done here at Rock Candy is recreate that same feeling of camaraderie that Shades had by crafting a thriving magazine and record label dedicated to the spirit of what it was all about in the first instance. Our active Facebook pages, run by Johnny and Julia, are a good example of modern technology using old school values to support core interests in our world. But for us, vinyl, CDs, and the printed word still reign supreme.

PUTTING TOGETHER this issue of the magazine has been a blast, as usual. The fact that we can run with a classic era Kiss cover and have features about them that are as every bit as fascinating as the characters involved is testament to our philosophy. It's also gratifying to seek out the stories behind topics as diverse as the history of Donington, Iron Maiden's criminally underrated Blaze Bayley years, and a reappraisal of Golden Earring's 'Moontan' album. And let's not forget the hilarious story of a 1988 Van Halen practice run to the stage from their dressing room! As we've said before, and will no doubt continue to say, there's nothing wrong with living in the past!

Derek O.

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www.rockcandymag.com
created and maintained by Ross Sampson Solutions

***Rock Candy Mag* subscriptions**
Go to *www.rockcandymag.com/subscriptions*

Printed by Sterling Press Limited, Kettering Venture Park, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 6SU, England.

Distributed by Marketforce, 2nd Floor, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU, England.

THIS ISSUE'S BIG QUESTION – WHAT WAS THE FIRST ROCK RECORD YOU BOUGHT?

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'Alive II' – Kiss
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'Jeepster' – T.Rex (single)
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'In Hearing Of' – Atomic Rooster

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Putting together this issue's cover story on the Kiss solo albums has been something of a labour of love. Those four releases hold a special place in my heart, because they were the first records the New Yorkers put out when I was already a fully paid-up fan. Nothing quite beat the magic of brand new releases in your early days of rock fandom. I'd just turned 14 when the Kiss solo albums dropped in September '78. When the band's previous effort, 1977's 'Love Gun', was released I didn't even know they existed. But early in '78 I'd been introduced to Kiss via a friend's copy of the 'Double Platinum' compilation and had gone all-in. So when the solo albums were announced my excitement level was off the scale.

I had an agonising decision to make, though. I didn't have enough money for all four records, so the choice was either to plump for one album, or go for all four singles that were also being released simultaneously. I went with the latter option, four 45s in different coloured vinyl – and each with a free mask of Ace, Gene, Paul and Peter. Was I knocked out? Not really. Paul's 'Hold Me, Touch Me', Gene's 'Radioactive' and Peter's 'You Matter To Me' were way softer than Kiss music. Only Ace's 'New York Groove' captured the spirit of the band that had captured my heart. Thankfully, though, it wasn't too long before I was able to enjoy the full albums. Manager Bill Aucoin's over-ambitious plans of shipping a million copies of each disc backfired and I was soon able to pick up copies of cheap 'cut-outs' imported from the States. Only then did the full majesty of the Kiss solo album project reveal itself. It may have been a commercial failure, but to my mind those records will always be a huge creative success. Which is why, in *Rock Candy*'s endless quest always to go deeper, we unashamedly celebrate Kiss – The Solo Albums. Enjoy!

Howard Johnson – Editor
Email me at **hojo@rockcandymag.com**

UPFRONT

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Albums available on *Rock Candy* Records

Want to comment on anything in *Rock Candy* Mag? Email us: **Editorial@rockcandymag.com**

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Cover photo: Fin Costello. Colourisation of Kiss cover image: Nicolas Senegas. Contents page photos: Rich Galbraith; Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/LGI Stock/Corbis/VCG; Julia Goode

ROCK CANDY WRITER PLAYLISTS

THERE'S GREAT ROCK MUSIC ALL OVER YOUTUBE, THE PROBLEM IS FINDING IT. SO LET US TAKE THE PAIN OUT OF SEARCHING WITH OUR EASY-TO-ACCESS PLAYLISTS.
SIMPLY TYPE THE WORDS IN BRACKETS INTO YOUR YOUTUBE SEARCH BOX... AND ROCK!

FIVE PERFECT EXAMPLES OF PROTOTYPE METAL

Chosen by Giles Hamilton

Lucifer's Friend – 'Ride The Sky' (Lucifer's Friend – Ride The Sky 1971 Remastered)
Featuring a jolly nice intro from a German presenter, Lucifer's Friend need no second invitation to start pummelling the place with this particular piece of bludgeon riffola. Singer John Lawton is modelling an interesting hairstyle, but that doesn't stop the guy who would later become Uriah Heep's frontman from vocally shredding with his trademark banshee wail.

Buffalo – 'Sunrise' (Buffalo – "Sunrise (Come My Way)")
This is fantastic black and white footage of Aussie rockers Buffalo, the band that was even heavier than Sabbath. This, the opening track from the group's second album, 1973's 'Volcanic Rock', is a riff-hungry monster driven by guitarist John Baxter and topped off by a wholehearted performance from vocalist Dave Tice. Why no one bought Buffalo's records is hard to fathom. But you can enjoy this 1974 footage time and again.

Spooky Tooth – 'Better By You, Better Than Me' (Spooky Tooth – Better By You Better Than Me (The Barn 1969))
If you thought British heavy rock started with Sabbath, then you need to take a look at this black and white barnstormer from 1969. Spooky Tooth were wild, sludgy and dirty when it really wasn't fashionable. Here the band's sound swirls around Mike Harrison's emotional vocals in a maelstrom of mayhem. Raw, emotional, and not for the faint-hearted.

UFO – 'Prince Kajuku' (UFO – Prince Kajuku 1971 HD)
Here's the visual proof that even before the arrival of Michael Schenker, UFO were capable of producing melodic heavy rock with the woefully underrated Mick Bolton on guitar. This 'live in a TV studio' footage from 1971 features the band in uncompromising mood, and no one more so than drummer Andy Parker with his impressive psychedelic trousers-and-waistcoat combo!

The Sensational Alex Harvey Band – 'Midnight Moses' (Sensational Alex Harvey Band – 'Midnight Moses')
This black and white live festival film, most likely from '73 or '74, is frighteningly attitudinal as the Scottish rockers mix pre-punk intensity with juggernaut riffs and a seriously out-there vocal performance from Alex himself. If ever a band's music encapsulated a 'couldn't give a monkey's' attitude, then this is it.

FIVE AMAZING COVER VERSIONS BY CLASSIC ROCK BANDS

Chosen by Ross Sampson

Van Halen – 'You Really Got Me' (Van Halen – You really got me 1980)
When Van Halen's version of The Kinks' classic hit the airwaves in 1978 there was no doubt it would usurp the original in the hearts of rock fans. This TV studio clip from 1980 reminds us of the song's crunching glory, as well as Van Halen's showbizzy take on metal. Check out Diamond Dave's stage get-up and marvel at Alex Van Halen's utterly ludicrous bass drums!

Thin Lizzy – 'Whiskey In The Jar' (THIN LIZZY - Whisky In The Jar (1973 UK TV Performance) - HIGH QUALITY HQ -)
This is a marvellous version of the old 1967 Beasley Brothers folk number performed by Lizzy on *Top Of The Pops* back in 1973. There are several things to note in this video. The excellent performance from what was then a three-piece band, some great '70s-style visual distortions, and numerous people dancing enthusiastically to entirely the wrong beat!

Judas Priest – 'Diamonds And Rust' (Judas Priest - Diamonds and Rust- Live-1983- maiko)
It was quite a surprise to hear this version of the 1975 hit by folk queen Joan Baez on Priest's 'Sin After Sin' album in 1977. This live version from the famous US Festival in 1983 is noticeable for a rabble-rousing performance, complete with synchronised guitar movements and some interesting close-ups showing every bead of sweat on singer Rob Halford's brow! Apparently Joan Baez herself loved Priest's version, which shows remarkably good taste!

Quiet Riot – 'Cum On Feel The Noize' (Quiet Riot – Cum On Feel The Noize (live))
Ten years after Slade had a huge UK hit in 1973, Quiet Riot racked up a number five US smash with the same ditty. This 'live in concert' version of the song (undated, but it looks like it was around '83) proves that the late Kevin DuBrow sounded an awful lot like Noddy Holder. But there was more to Quiet Riot's success than that. The sight of Carlos Cavazo sitting on DuBrow's shoulders – like Randy Rhoads used to – while peeling off a guitar solo shows this lot were also about good old-fashioned fun.

Metallica – 'Breadfan' (Metallica: Breadfan (MetOnTour - Barcelona, Spain - 2018))
This is a live version of the Budgie classic from earlier this year. But the original 'Breadfan' came out in 1973 and Metallica first released it as a B-side to 'Eye Of The Beholder' in 1988, then included it on their 1998 'Garage Inc.' album. This performance proves that the song's pounding riff never gets old. And I just love Hetfield's one-word "BREADFAAAAN!" intro.

THE DEAD DAISIES

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14.07. SLO-LASKO - BEER & FLOWERS FESTIVAL · 16.07. EST-TALLINN - TALLINN SONG FESTIVAL GROUND (WITH GUNS N' ROSES)
18.07. DE-KARLSRUHE - SUBSTAGE · 19.07. CH-SAINT JULIEN-EN GENEVOIS - GUITARE EN SCENE FESTIVAL (WITH JOE SATRIANI)
20.07. DE-BURGLENGENFELD - VAZ · 21.07. DE-ASCHAFFENBURG - COLOS-SAAL · 22.07. CZ-PRAGUE - LUCERNA MUSIC BAR
24.07. DE-SAARBRÜCKEN - GARAGE · 25.07. DE-LUDWIGSBURG - ROCKFABRIK · 27.07. UK-HOLMFIRTH - PICTUREDOME
28.07. UK-PENTRICH - ROCK & BLUES CUSTOM SHOW · 29.07. UK-EBBW VALE - STEELHOUSE FESTIVAL

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SUN 26TH / MONTREAL, QC / FOUFOUNES ELECTRIQUES · TUE 28TH / NEW YORK, NY / HIGHLINE BALLROOM
WED 29TH / WARRENDALE, PA / JERGEL'S · THU 30TH / CINCINNATI, OH / BOGART'S · FRI 31ST / LANCASTER, PA / CHAMELEON CLUB

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FRI 7TH / DALLAS, TX / TREES · SAT 8TH / AUSTIN, TX / COME AND TAKE IT LIVE · WED 12TH / LAS VEGAS, NV / FREMONT COUNTRY CLUB
THU 13TH / SAN DIEGO, CA / BRICK BY BRICK · FRI 14TH / POMONA, CA / THE GLASS HOUSE · SAT 15TH / PHOENIX, AZ / THE MARQUEE
SUN 16TH / LOS ANGELES, CA / ROXY THEATRE

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FROZEN IN TIME

DATELINE: 9 APRIL 1972

The quiet man who made a beautiful loud noise...

IT'S A FUNNY THING. I was just about to put pen to paper about Rory Gallagher when I remembered that he's no longer with us. Sounds crazy I know, especially as he died some 23 years ago on 14 June 1995. But such was the overwhelming presence of this quiet Irishman from Ballyshannon, it's easy to forget he's gone. In a way it's not that surprising. Rory's way of doing things would always best be described as 'by stealth'. Not for him the typical rock star bravado of shouting his message with a loud hailer from the music business pulpit. Rory's style was much lower key, preferring to float the word out via a succession of brilliantly crafted albums and a never-ending succession of live dates.

RORY WAS an extremely sensitive and reserved man who preferred to let his music to do the talking. I met and interviewed him on a couple of occasions, and he provided stark contrast to other musicians who were usually so full of themselves and keen to boast about their achievements. Rory was softly spoken, but the purity of his delivery was wonderful and refreshing. He turned up for one afternoon interview dressed in his customary plimsolls, blue jeans and checked shirt, fiddled with the tuning of *that* Strat throughout, then jumped on stage later that night in exactly the same clothes. There was no pretension with Rory, no sign that his lifestyle was different on or off stage. After all the bluster of seeing other acts ham it up, Rory's back-to-basics approach was, in its own way, brilliantly effective as a selling point. But that wasn't the intention.

GALLAGHER'S WORK has been reappraised and re-presented via a number of judiciously crafted releases and reissues, many honing in on his various playing styles, from acoustic fingerpicking to belting blues rock. They've been lovingly curated by Rory's brother Donal, who's been determined to keep the flame alive and make sure Rory doesn't go down as a mere footnote in the history books. When it comes to Rory's catalogue of material, you won't go wrong with his first band Taste's 'Live At The Isle Of Wight' album from 1971, or with a string of superb solo albums, spearheaded by 1973's 'Tattoo', 'Against The Grain' from '75, and 1979's 'Top Priority'. The latter is a particularly interesting record where Rory reveals an interest in espionage and the post-World War II Cold War.

THIS LIVE photo of Rory on stage at the legendary Marquee club in London back in 1972 evokes not only excitement, but also sadness. Rory would always take to the stage in an explosion of energy, immediately lost in his own performance. He was a man who always wanted to play to the very best of his ability. This was his only concern. His face here betrays not only unbridled joy, but also steely determination as he works his battered Sunburst Stratocaster, faithful bassist lieutenant Gerry McAvoy gurning with pleasure behind him. Rory Gallagher. A true rock legend.

DEREK OLIVER

Rory making his Strat scream in pain...

Photo: Getty Images

STEP BACK IN TIME

MAY–JUNE 1988

ROCK CANDY'S DAVE LING LEAFS THROUGH THE BACK PAGES OF THE UK ROCK PRESS TO BRING THE BIG NEWS ITEMS OF THE DAY BACK TO LIFE AND ANALYSE HOW THOSE STORIES REALLY PLAYED OUT…

Nikki Sixx in 1983. Or was it Matthew Trippe?

TRIPPE OR TRIPE – CRÜE'S 'DOPPELGANGER' SPEAKS

DATELINE: 14 MAY 1988
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT Matthew Trippe's claim that he stood in for Nikki Sixx in Mötley Crüe between the spring of 1983 and April of 1984 is one of the weirdest stories ever to find its way into print.

Kerrang! first aired the story a few months earlier, when writer Jon Hotten put forward a theory that early in '83 Sixx (born Frank Carlton Serafino Feranna Jr) had been involved in a car crash so serious that it prevented him from performing with the band. Consequently, according to the story, Crüe's management then secretly brought in Matthew John Trippe – "same hair, same make-up, a few inches shorter, a little fatter but nonetheless very similar in looks" – to 'become' Nikki Sixx.

The story also suggested that Trippe "composed" the tunes credited to Sixx on the band's second album, 1983's 'Shout At The Devil', and toured with the group. The evidence, however, was *very* flimsy. Sixx was supposedly thin, then fat, then thin again. He was tall, then short, then tall once more. And then there was the important navel issue to consider! Trippe's navel was apparently elongated and depressed, while Feranna's was more round-shaped.

Feranna, the real Nikki Sixx, apparently only agreed to re-join Mötley Crüe when Trippe was arrested on suspicion of robbery in 1984 and was jailed, or so the story claimed.

DOUG THALER, part of the band's management team at the time, denounced Trippe as a "lunatic" and insisted that there would be no official response. But Trippe offered an interview to *Kerrang!* freelancer Ed Esposito. In the piece Trippe claimed to have befriended Crüe guitarist Mick Mars at the Troubadour in Los Angeles, which led to the offer to join the band in Sixx's name, co-manager Doc McGhee apparently telling him: "We don't want to lose the fans."

These claims were far-fetched, but Trippe's attention to detail suggested he'd at least done his homework. He talked about sharing a flat with Tommy Lee on Arisida Avenue, and claimed he was pals with Richard Fisher, the band's tour manager, naming important dates and events in the group's story, some of which a casual observer shouldn't have known. On the downside, Trippe had a strong stammer that he tried to control with marijuana. Nikki, of course, does not.

TRIPPE CLAIMED to have written a song called 'Shout With The Devil', which McGhee demanded be changed to 'Shout *At* The Devil', along with other tracks on the album such as 'Knock 'Em Dead, Kid' and 'Looks That Kill'. Trippe says he then went out on the Crüe tour supporting Ozzy Osbourne where, "I kind of got a little annoyed," and talked to Esposito of beginning "to hate

Photos: Getty Images/Michael Ochs Archive; IconicPix/Bertrand Alary

[Mötley singer] Vince Neil, he was getting to be a little fat-headed and thought he was in charge of the band."

According to Trippe, the whole affair went sideways after his arrest in the summer of 1984 for his part in a robbery of a magazine stand. Released on bail, he found out that Crüe had gone to Europe on tour and said he was told by Doc McGhee that "the show must go on."

Following the car crash that killed Hanoi Rocks drummer Razzle in December of 1984, Trippe said he first heard that driver Vince Neil was the casualty and was disappointed to learn the truth. Trippe assumed, falsely, that 'his' band was going to find itself singer-less for a considerable amount of time. He claims to have called Hanoi's Michael Monroe to offer him the job of fronting Mötley Crüe. Unbelievably, Monroe is said to have replied: "Like, cool, man."

TRIPPE WAS eventually sentenced to two years' house arrest for the robbery. Mötley Crüe released their next album, 'Theatre Of Pain', in June of 1985, which included songs Trippe claims he wrote. Despite being out of the band by that time, Trippe believed he had an insurance policy, having used a private investigator to copyright the lyrics he claimed to have written for the title track of Mötley's following album, 'Girls, Girls, Girls'. At the time of the interview Trippe claimed handwriting analysis would prove his authorship of the words.

Asked how much he'd been paid to impersonate Sixx all this time, Trippe simply laughed: "I was kept so f**ked-up I simply didn't care about cash. I never really was paid. I always told Doc, 'I'm in it for the chicks and the booze, the drugs, the fun'. And that's what I got – no money."

In his *Kerrang!* interview Trippe appeared to believe he would eventually face his alleged former bandmates in the dock, his advisors counselling him against accepting out-of-court offers.

"Crüe had to cancel their UK tour because of Frankie [Sixx] and his [latest] drug thing once more," he said. "And [besides], Crüe is beginning to fade out now."

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

REGARDLESS OF THE ACTUAL truth in this incredible story, the sense was that Trippe himself firmly believed every last word of what he told *Kerrang!* Talking in 2018, Jon Hotten reiterates: "I believe that Trippe believed [his claims], and that's an odd kind of truth [for him]."

UNSURPRISINGLY, *KERRANG!*'S follow-up story sent the actual Nikki Sixx into an uncontrolled rage. When he and Tommy Lee came into the magazine's offices to review the singles not long after, Sixx used a baseball bat to smash up a record he was critiquing. Hotten was out of the office on the day in question, but he returned to find a fragment left on his desk. It had been signed: "Dear Jon, you're next. Nikki Sixx."

IN THE end Trippe didn't actually sue the band Mötley Crüe at all. Instead, he tried to bring a case against their manager Doc McGhee. The saga went on for a few more years, becoming just one more part of the band's sideshow of craziness.

At the eventual deposition, Trippe talked to McGhee as if he knew him, something that Doc found incredible. "It was weird enough managing Mötley Crüe as it was. This was just the icing on the cake," he later told Hotten. Post-deposition the case eventually died when its statute of limitations expired. Trippe's lawsuit against McGhee Entertainment ended on 10 December 1993.

MATTHEW TRIPPE has since been dismissed as an alcoholic, a drug addict, and above all a fantasist. But given that he passed away on 1 December 2014, aged 51, we'll never know what drove him to make his wild and outrageous claims.

Mötley Crüe L-R: Vince Neil, Frank Feranna/Matthew Trippe, Mick Mars, Tommy Lee

STEP BACK IN TIME

JIMMY PAGE RIDES OUT
DATELINE: 25 JUNE 1988
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

IN A WORLD EXCLUSIVE interview, legendary guitarist Jimmy Page invited writer Mick Wall to his house in Berkshire to discuss 'Outrider', his long-awaited debut album as a solo artist and, inevitably, to talk about his "Led Zeppelin past, present and future."

'Outrider' was released a little under two years after 'Mean Business', the second and final album Page recorded alongside ex-Free singer Paul Rodgers in The Firm. Jimmy admitted to Wall that it had felt strange working on 'Outrider' without the companionship of other musicians.

"Absolutely," he nodded, adding that on some days it had been "a struggle." That's not to say he'd created 'Outrider' alone, of course. Of the nine tracks featured, three were instrumentals featuring a variety of musicians including bassist Tony Franklin and drummers Jason Bonham and Barriemore Barlow. Three singers added their voices – John Miles, Chris Farlowe and a certain Robert Plant. It was Miles who would front Page's live band on an upcoming tour.

"He's extremely versatile," Jimmy explained. "The way he sings on this album is totally different to the sort of work he did, say, with The Alan Parsons Project."

Page said he'd used Chris Farlowe, "because he has such a strong identity to his voice. I needed someone with that vocal character."

Yet the most fascinating choice, of course, was Robert Plant, who sang on a single track, 'The Only One', for which he'd also written lyrics.

"Well, I'd played on a couple of tracks on his album [the same year's 'Now And Zen'] and I guess it's this temperate thing of working together," Jimmy rationalised. "We're really good mates anyway, and when I had the track I thought it would be perfect for Robert. He really enthused about it."

THINGS WERE, of course, very different from the pair's days together in Led Zeppelin. But as Jimmy pointed out, "We still get on in that working environment, sparking off each other."

Wall wondered whether the presence of Jason Bonham, son of Jimmy's late Zeppelin bandmate John, was likely to "raise a lot of eyebrows"?

"Possibly," the guitarist acknowledged, "[though] I would think favourably when they hear what we're doing. He's certainly got the type of power in his drumming which is..." he continued, before seemingly falling short of making family-based comparisons, and going instead with: "I mean, it's just right for me anyway."

PAGE BELIEVED that the live show would be "pretty varied", a split between the various styles for which he was known. "There'll be a lot of rock'n'roll, because that's basically what I am, a rock'n'roll guitarist. But there will be quite a lot of blues as well."

And Led Zeppelin songs? "Yes, possibly" was the reply.

When asked which Zeppelin numbers would likely be resurrected, Jimmy played the trusted old "we haven't worked out the set-list" card, so Wall wondered about the possibility of hearing 'Stairway To Heaven' as part of the show...

"Yes, I'd do that live, but as an instrumental," Page responded. "I think the audience would probably sing it with Robert not being there."

Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin/Wirelmage; IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive

THE YEAR of 1988 had seen the arrival of Kingdom Come – or as Page corrected Wall, "Kingdom Clone", the US/German soundalikes whose hero worship of Zeppelin was transparent. There were also Whitesnake and Cinderella who, as Mick put it, were "ripping off all your old licks."

"I'm expected to go into a rage," Page chuckled. "But when I saw Whitesnake's video [for 'In The Still Of The Night'] and there's a part where the guy [Adrian Vandenberg] starts playing with a bow, I promise you, I fell on the ground laughing. I found it a bit cheap."

WITH REGARD to the potential for a full scale Led Zeppelin reunion, Page was brave enough to state simply: "I don't know whether the time for that will come or not. Robert's got a solo career which he's working on [and] I really want to go out there and have a go on my own at the moment."

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

BY THE TIME *KERRANG!*'S story ran, Jimmy had already reunited with Zeppelin to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Atlantic Records on 14 May at Madison Square Garden in New York. Page's tour for 'Outrider' began in Florida in September of 1988. As predicted, the set included an instrumental take on 'Stairway To Heaven', plus Zep's 'Over The Hills And Far Away', 'Custard Pie' and 'In My Time of Dying'.

Though 'Outrider' earned Page a Grammy nomination, its sales failed to set the world on fire. Years later the guitarist looked back on the album and considered it "alright", adding: "It's demo-like compared with the overproduced albums of the time. It didn't do very well [commercially speaking, but that] doesn't matter – though I did tour."

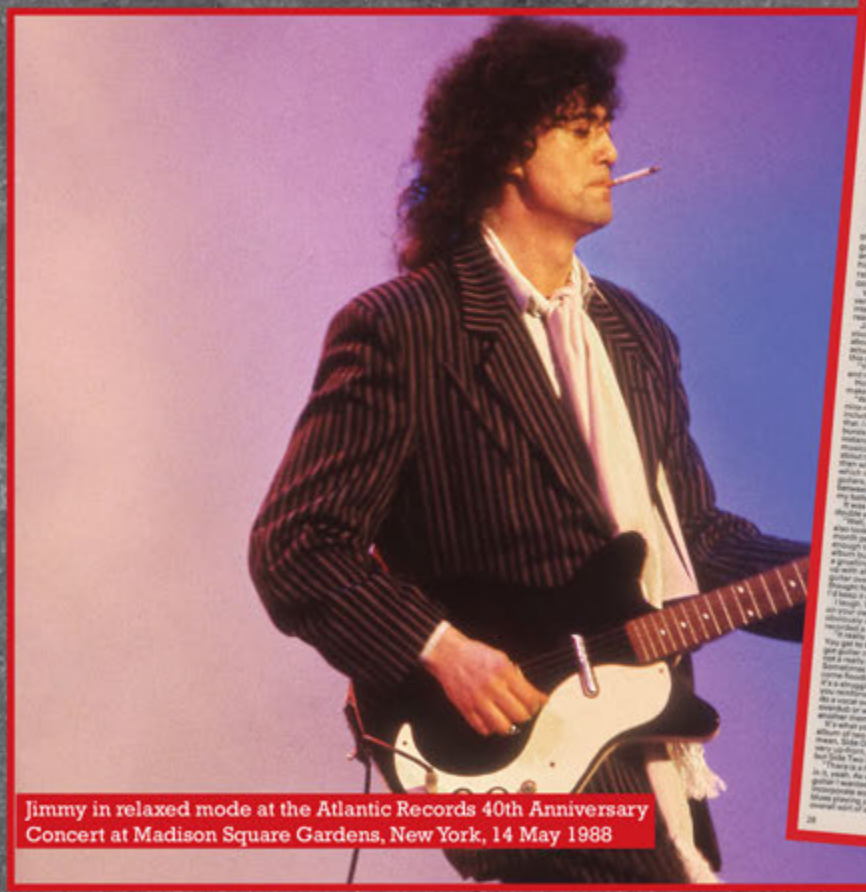
'OUTRIDER' CERTAINLY put Page back out there again, but few suspected his next album would be fronted by the very singer whose outrageous thievery he'd dismissed as "a bit cheap."

Page and Whitesnake's David Coverdale made just one album together – 1993's 'Coverdale Page' – that went Top Five on both sides of the Atlantic. After the release, there was a short run of dates in Japan, but a full American tour was cancelled as a result of slow ticket sales.

That embarrassment must have played its part in Page reuniting with Robert Plant a year afterwards for the MTV series *Unplugged*, released on CD as 'No Quarter: Jimmy Page And Robert Plant Unledded' and followed by the Grammy-winning studio set 'Walking Into Clarksdale'. Page was clearly still looking for something and as the previous millennium ended he hit the road with The Black Crowes as his backing band.

THE REUNION that nobody thought might happen finally took place when Led Zeppelin (with Jason Bonham on drums) regrouped at London's O2 Arena in 2007. But despite the staggering success of that one-off show Plant had absolutely no interest in taking things further – however lucrative the pay cheque.

And still we await a successor to 'Outrider'. We're more than a decade on from Zeppelin's unexpected rebirth at the O2, and Page hasn't toured as a solo act since 1988, though year after year he voices the wish to express himself with new music. His commitments as the gatekeeper to the Led Zeppelin catalogue always seem to quash any such ambitions – if, in fact, those continually-stated aspirations still remain.



Jimmy in relaxed mode at the Atlantic Records 40th Anniversary Concert at Madison Square Gardens, New York, 14 May 1988

RIDING THE RANGE

Two months ago legendary ex-Led Zeppelin guitarist JIMMY PAGE invited MICK WALL to his studio in the country outside London for a world exclusive interview. Mick was the first journalist to hear Jimmy's new solo LP 'Outrider' after which they talked about the album and about Zeppelin past, present and future. A more recent update to this major interview will follow as a second instalment very soon . . .

STEP BACK IN TIME

Queensrÿche photographed in Helsinki, Finland, 15 October 1988. L-R clockwise: Eddie Jackson (bass), Michael Wilton (guitar), Scott Rockenfield (drums), Chris DeGarmo (guitar), Geoff Tate (vocals)

QUEENSRŸCHE COME OF AGE WITH 'OPERATION: MINDCRIME'

DATELINE: 28 MAY 1988
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

AS GEOFF TATE AND Chris DeGarmo admitted during a two-hour conversation in Mick Wall's New York hotel room, by 1988 the honeymoon was over for Queensrÿche. The Seattle band had enjoyed their moment in the sun with a praised debut EP, a British tour as guests of Dio, and a respectable full-length debut from 1984 called 'The Warning'. Its overly ambitious follow-up, '86's 'Rage For Order', had not been, as Wall put it, "immediately listener-friendly."

"We were disappointed with the overall sales of 'Rage...'," sighed guitarist DeGarmo. "But as a piece of music I still stand by everything we did on that album."

Now, encouraged to "forget about the radio" by new managers Peter Mensch and Cliff Burnstein, Queensrÿche were about to reveal something even more demanding. Clocking in at just under an hour long, the group's third album was a conceptually linked series of 15 tracks, including two instrumentals and one spoken word piece. To this day the precise meaning of its storyline, which involved Nikki, a bitter street kid strung out on heroin, the sinister Dr X, who moulds the anger of his protégé to his own revolutionary ends, and a former hooker-turned-nun, Sister Mary, remains unclear.

BACK THEN, frontman Tate laughed: "It's about mindcrime... revolution... politics... religion... murder... power and control."

When Wall quipped that the singer had forgotten sex, drugs and rock'n'roll, Tate deadpanned: "Oh, that too."

And death? "Yeah, death as well. We collected the set on this one," the singer guffawed.

Tate told an unusual tale about the inspiration for one of the album's pivotal characters. The idea for Sister Mary had arrived while observing dancers at a disco in Copenhagen. "Suddenly the mass of bodies parted and I swear I saw this nun in the middle of the floor, her arms folded across her chest, swaying to her own beat," Geoff revealed. "Watching her triggered a whole scenario in my mind. What was she doing there? Who was she?"

QUEENSRŸCHE'S DECISION to use producer Peter Collins of Rush, Gary Moore and Nik Kershaw fame was to prove inspired. The Englishman pulled the music and cinematic sound effects together perfectly. Actor Anthony Valentine, known for *Colditz*, voiced Dr X, while Pamela Moore took on Sister Mary. Engineer Paul Northfield recorded the sound of a limousine window rolling down for 'Suite Sister Mary'. Michael Kamen brought arrangement skills later employed by Metallica by directing the choirs and introducing moody cellos.

"We wanted sophistication, but with an earthy feel," Tate explained. "Something to make you cling to the edges of your seat every time you play it."

As Wall correctly pointed out, Tate's voice had never sounded so magnificent: "rich, understated, it can ring like a telephone or crack like a gun."

AT THE time of the interview Tate and DeGarmo had no idea of Queensrÿche's touring plans, though they hoped to cram as much of 'Operation: Mindcrime' in as possible.

"It all depends where we're playing and whether we're doing our own 90-minute show or a 45-minute opening spot [for another, bigger band] in an arena," Tate theorised. "It would work out much better to keep the theme of the album intact, but integrate some of the older material into the story, too – to turn the whole concept into a real live showcase."

Photo: IconicPix/George Chin

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

IT'S DOUBTFUL THEY'D HAVE admitted it, but Geoff Tate and Chris DeGarmo must have been terrified waiting for reactions to their biggest, grandest and most challenging musical statement to date. Back then the old baseball adage of 'three strikes and you're out' couldn't have loomed any more threateningly. However, the band's initial confidence was to prove well-founded. Tours with the likes of Def Leppard, Metallica and Guns N'Roses turned Queensrÿche into arena-level headliners for their next album, 1990's 'Empire'.

Though they would make other records that matched or even outsold it, 'Operation: Mindcrime' remains Queensrÿche's *magnum opus*. To some extent it actually came to define the band – something that became a blessing and a curse – as the years passed.

"I understand why people always bring '...Mindcrime' up as our best record," Tate told me in a 2003 interview. "Do I like that? No, I do not. I won't start throwing the furniture around, but it is a touchy subject."

THE FACT that the band had kept the story's conclusion open-ended always left room for a sequel. Sure enough, with fortunes flagging and DeGarmo long since out of the group, 'Operation: Mindcrime II' arrived in 2006. Out on tour, the sibling albums were sometimes performed back to back. However, Tate's relationship with the rest of Queensrÿche was becoming ever more toxic and in 2012 the two parties went their separate ways. Tate now fronts his own band, known as Operation: Mindcrime, retaining the exclusive right to perform the album of the same name and its follow-up in their entirety as a unique performance. Co-founding members guitarist Michael Wilton, bassist Eddie Jackson and drummer Scott Rockenfield – who hired ex-Crimson Glory man Todd La Torre as their new frontman – secured ownership of the Queensrÿche band name.

It was all rather undignified for a hugely talented and daring group that had fully deserved the epithet of "the thinking man's heavy metal band."

SNIPPETS – SHORT, SHARP SHOCKS FROM MAY-JUNE 1988

POISON HIT BULLSEYE SECOND TIME AROUND

DATELINE: 23 MAY 1988
MAGAZINE: *METAL HAMMER*

Following the global breakthrough of their independent debut album, 1986's 'Look What The Cat Dragged In!', Poison had it all to prove with follow-up release 'Open Up And Say... Ah!'. Four big singles, including the power ballad 'Every Rose Has Its Thorn', would prove that the band weren't one-hit wonders. Awarding the release four out of five, Jane Wallace wrote: "Funny how Poison can leave you with a good taste in your mouth."

JOE LYNN TURNER DEFENDS YNGWIE

DATELINE: 7 MAY 1988
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

Promoting Yngwie J. Malmsteen's Rising Force album 'Odyssey', Steffan Chirazi interviewed the guitarist and his singer, ex-Rainbow frontman Joe Lynn Turner, for a cover story titled "Will Yngwie and Joe last the course?" Of course they didn't, but JLT did deliver a memorable quote. "We are two of the least pretentious people you could goddamn meet, and our egos are minute!"

UFO PONDER THE FUTURE

DATELINE: 23 MAY 1988
MAGAZINE: *METAL HAMMER*

1988 was a strange time for UFO. After '87's one-off gig with Myke Gray on guitar, and a mini-album, 'Ain't Misbehavin'', singer Phil Mogg still couldn't decide whether to struggle on without Michael Schenker. "The situation has its advantages and disadvantages," the singer told Chris Welch. Unsurprisingly, UFO split up once again in '89.

SCORPS RELEASE A "FILLER-FREE" TENTH STUDIO ALBUM

DATELINE: JUNE 1988
MAGAZINE: *METAL FORCES*

Writer Dave Shack called 'Savage Amusement' "nothing short of stunning", suggesting that there was no trace of padding within its nine songs. "At least five of them are absolute classics – I kid you not." His advice was simple: "I'll just shut up and you go and buy the damned thing and hear it for yourself."

STEP BACK IN TIME

Testament photographed in Chicago, Illinois. L-R: Alex Skolnick (guitar), Chuck Billy (vocals), Louie Clemente (drums), Greg Christian (bass), Eric Peterson (guitar)

TESTAMENT TRY TO ESTABLISH THE NEW ORDER

DATELINE: 14 MAY 1988
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

BACK IN THE SPRING of 1988 the parameters of thrash metal were still being explored and defined. As a musical genre, thrash was still fairly young and although most would eventually see the error of their ways, at the time many rock fans refused to take it seriously.

The August unveiling of Metallica's '...And Justice For All', an album that saw Lars Ulrich and company make tentative attempts to court the mainstream with accompanying videos, was still a few months away. Later that same summer, Metallica would join Van Halen, the Scorpions, Dokken and Kingdom Come on America's own Monsters Of Rock tour. But in May of '88 thrash was still very much an acquired taste.

'The Big Four', a term that teamed Metallica with Anthrax, Megadeth and Slayer, had yet to enter common parlance. There wasn't really a big *anything* about thrash back then. To those of a delicate palate it was just a big, ugly, unsophisticated noise.

TESTAMENT WERE about to disprove this notion with an album called – somewhat appropriately – 'The New Order'. The band from Berkeley, California were far removed from your basic, run-of-the-mill numbskull proto-meatheads. Lead guitarist Alex Skolnick had grown up admiring Edward Van Halen, Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton and Randy Rhoads, and the band's music married intensity with real melody and hooklines. A year previously, in April of 1987, the group had raised a few inquisitive eyebrows when they released debut album 'The Legacy' and enjoyed a successful British tour supporting Anthrax. But as Xavier Russell wrote in a *Kerrang!* review, 'The New Order' provided proof that Testament were maturing "like a nice ponging Stilton or an extremely runny Brie." Either way, Russell was mightily impressed. "What we have here is a fine young band who are at last developing their own style and going straight to the top, mark my words. How different is 'The New Order' to its predecessor 'The Legacy'? In a nutshell, totally, and I was completely taken aback."

'Disciples Of The Watch', which Russell identified as "easily the standout cut", was based on the Stephen King short story *Children Of The Corn*. Meanwhile, vocalist Chuck Billy continued to step out of the shadow of his predecessor Steve 'Zetro' Souza, who quit the band for rivals Exodus before the release of Testament's 1987 debut album. "Chuck has really improved as a vocalist, he's actually beginning to sing now," Russell noted, citing the track 'A Day Of Reckoning' as evidence.

RUSSELL HAD no qualms about awarding the maximum five K score to 'The New Order', taking his Stateside *Kerrang!* colleague Steffan Chirazi to task for the previous issue's live review from The Stone in San Francisco that had concluded with the prediction: "I do not believe this band will grow much bigger."

"The Testament backlash has already started. The knives are out, sharpened and waiting to carve – I couldn't believe my eyes," Xavier fumed. "Try telling that to the 100,000 fans who bought 'The Legacy' or the English fans they've acquired since the Anthrax tour."

Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

THAT TESTAMENT ARE STILL regarded as being on a level beneath The Big Four of thrash is one of life's most puzzling injustices. Chronologically speaking, their rivals had a head start, of course. 'The Legacy' was released in '87, well after the debuts of their rivals. Musically, though, Testament were just as gifted as those elite bands. Alex Skolnick could have walked into any of them, while in Chuck Billy Testament had a frontman blessed with charisma and identity. Their catalogue remains consistent, too. Save for the disappointing 'Demonic' from 1997, they've never put out a clunker to rival Metallica's 'St Anger'.

AND YET, like Exodus, Testament were left eating The Big Four's dust. For a while it seemed like they might keep pace. A not-inconsiderable 250,000 copies of 'The New Order' were sold, a figure the group outstripped with a third album, 'Practice What You Preach'. They headlined the Hammersmith Odeon while touring 1990's 'Souls Of Black', then adopted a less speed-based approach with 1992's 'The Ritual' to survive the grunge years. Skolnick's departure that same year was a hammer blow, though. "I'd reached a point where I wanted to play lots of styles of music," he told me a few years back. "I love heavy metal, but it's not all I do."

What followed was a constant stream of line-up changes as rhythm guitarist Eric Peterson and Chuck Billy – who also beat cancer in 2001 – fought to keep the ship stable. However, it wasn't until Skolnick rejoined in 2005 that we really saw the best of Testament again. In something of an Indian summer, their most recent trio of albums – 'The Formation Of Damnation' (2008), 'Dark Roots Of Earth' (2012) and 'Brotherhood Of The Snake' (2016) – are as vital as anything the thrash metal genre has ever produced.

BACK IN 2012 Eric Peterson admitted to me that Metallica, Anthrax *et al* "were the ones who started up this genre. Testament was also a part of that," he added. "But we were a day late and a dollar short on all of that success."

Decades later Peterson still felt his band deserved membership of the Big Four club. "Were the scene beginning over again now, and if it were up to me, I'd make it the Big *Five*," Peterson smiled. "Would that fifth place go to Testament or Exodus... or Overkill? I think it would probably have to be us, based on record sales and what we've done."

SNIPPETS – SHORT, SHARP SHOCKS FROM MAY-JUNE 1988

"WE'RE CALLED MEGADETH BECAUSE IT INTIMIDATES PEOPLE!"

DATELINE: 6 JUNE 1988
MAGAZINE: *METAL HAMMER*

Promoting an appearance at Monsters Of Rock, Megadeth leader Dave Mustaine bizarrely explained that he liked the way his band's name "intimidates people. We took the 'A' out of 'death' so that talent sat hand in hand with death, without dying. Megadeth is supposed to mean a million deaths – to me that's a devastating amount of power."

EDWARD VAN HALEN SPILLS THE SECRET OF HIS SUCCESS

DATELINE: 28 MAY 1988
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

Pre-empting their new album 'OU812' – the second with Sammy Hagar as lead vocalist – Van Halen's guitar wizard told Steffan Chirazi that cutting himself off from rivals helped to make his band unique. "I don't listen to the radio and our sound remains fresh and innovative, because I'm not falling into the trap of being brainwashed by what's hip and what ain't."

PAUL SABU IS "TOO GOOD FOR HIS OWN GOOD"

DATELINE: 14 MAY 1988
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

Celebrating the release of Only Child's eponymous debut album, Derek Oliver reluctantly considered the possibility that Paul Sabu was more talented than Michael Bolton, yet had none of the latter's good luck. "I've had stuff like an A&R man dying or getting fired before [I could] sign his contract – or maybe his leg would fall off or the label's building would fall down" Sabu rued. "It's unbelievable."

PERSON OF INTEREST

ROCK CANDY SALUTES THE ROCK STARS WHO DID THINGS DIFFERENTLY...

John Corabi, wearing an extravagant hat, during his four-year stint with Mötley Crüe

JOHN CORABI

"WE THOUGHT JOHN WAS the perfect frontman for Mötley," said Nikki Sixx. "He had a better voice than Vince and was also a better songwriter. He was the type of man we always wanted for the band. But the fans didn't agree!"

Sometimes in music things just don't work out. Call it chemistry, call it timing, call it anything you like. But some musical marriages just aren't made in heaven.

John Corabi, who replaced Vince Neil as Mötley Crüe vocalist in 1992, is a case in point. The man from Philadelphia is a fine singer and a stylish guitarist, so why is it that he was the nearly man of the Los Angeles rock scene in the '80s and '90s?

BORN IN 1959, Corabi first honed his chops as the vocalist in late '80s band Angora. Despite record company interest the group imploded, as Corabi admits, "because there was too much partying going on." Nevertheless, his next band The Scream saw him climbing the rock star totem pole as he joined up with former Racer X men, guitarist Bruce Bouillet and bassist John Alderete. A 1991 album, 'Let It Scream', was released on Hollywood Records, bridging the gap between the big hair metal of the previous decade and the burgeoning grunge movement. Corabi's time with The Scream ended, however, when he was given the chance to take over from Vince Neil in Mötley Crüe.

"I wasn't really a fan of the Crüe," he admits. "But everyone told me I had to accept the offer to join as it was such a great opportunity."

CORABI RECORDED just one album with Mötley Crüe, an eponymous effort in 1994, plus an EP by the name of 'Quaternary' from the same year. The general consensus, though, is that this album was a commercial flop. A Top Ten position in the States and a Top 20 showing in the UK suggests that wasn't entirely true, but the subsequent tour did see the band struggling to sell tickets.

Under pressure from their label Elektra, Mötley dispensed with Corabi in 1996 and reunited with Neil. The next Mötley Crüe album, 1997's 'Generation Swine', contained tracks such as 'Flush' and 'Let Us Prey' that Corabi insists he helped write before his departure. The album was released in June, but by July things had soured. Corabi filed a $4 million lawsuit for alleged breach of contract, claiming that he was responsible for at least 80 percent of the material on the album.

"I'm not upset that I was fired," said Corabi. "I can totally understand why they got Vince back in the band. I'm not stupid. I'm upset at the *way* I was fired."

By 2013 it appears that Corabi had calmed down, saying, "I looked at things one way and they looked at it another. Ultimately we both walked away from the whole thing and said, 'You know what? Whatever.'"

IN 1997, shortly after he left Mötley Crüe, Corabi teamed up with former Kiss guitarist Bruce Kulick in Union, releasing two studio albums – 'Union' in 1998 and 'The Blue Room' in 1999 – as well as a 'Live In The Galaxy' effort in 1999. But despite praise from the critics, the band couldn't make any commercial headway and fizzled out.

Corabi then lived a nomadic musical existence, recording with many different acts, often working with more than one group at a time. As the '90s drew to a close he again teamed up with Bruce Kulick in the Eric Singer Project, primarily recording covers of classic rock songs alongside the two Kiss men.

In 2001, Corabi was recruited by RATT, but only as a rhythm guitarist, with former Love/Hate man Jizzy Pearl coming in as frontman. His stint with the band lasted seven years and although he never recorded with them, he did help to write 'Don't Let Go', which appeared on RATT's 2010 album, 'Infestation'.

In 2002 Corabi joined up with Twenty 4 Seven, alongside RATT drummer Bobby Blotzer and Danger Danger guitarist Rob Marcello. But an album, 'Destination Everywhere', failed to set the world alight.

By then relations between Corabi and his former Mötley mate Nikki Sixx had thawed to the point where both musicians collaborated on an album – 'Here Come The Brides' – in Brides Of Destruction, also featuring former LA Guns guitarist Tracii Guns. Corabi played guitar, but left the group in 2003 due to the reduced role he was playing. The album finally saw the light of day in 2004.

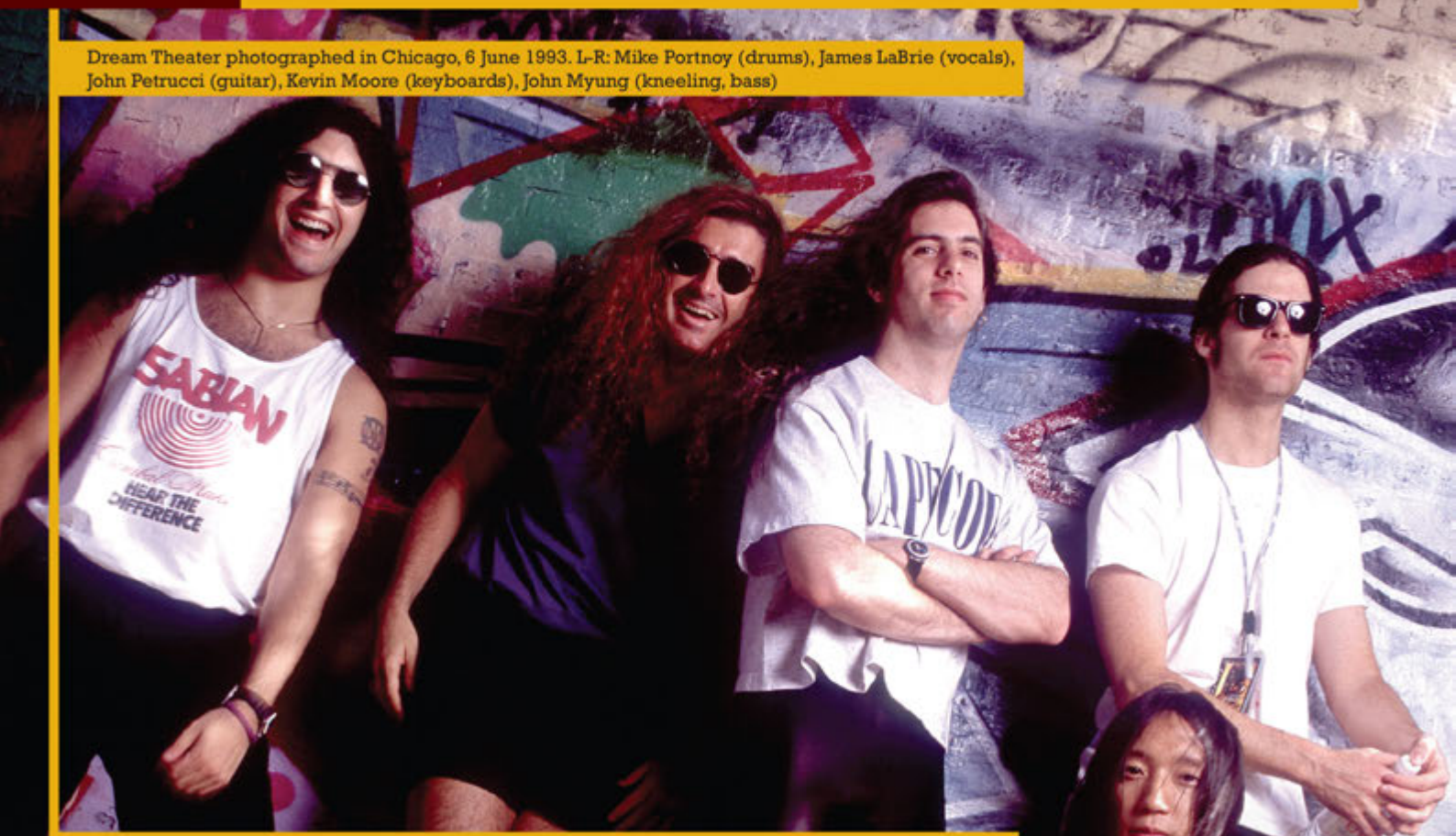
AS IF his CV isn't already long enough, Corabi has also performed in high profile covers bands with members of RATT, The Cult and Alice In Chains, contributed to Christian band Liberty N' Justice's 2007 album 'Independence Day', and appeared on Bruce Kulick's 'BK3'. A solo effort, 'Unplugged', came out in 2012, and there's a second solo album, 'Live '94 (One Night In Nashville)', where he performs the whole of the 'Mötley Crüe' album.

Since 2015 Corabi has fronted The Dead Daisies, recording three studio albums with the band, including the recently released 'Burn It Down'.

Creative, personable and articulate, John Corabi has been in demand as a 'go to' rock guy for three decades. He's put a *lot* of music out without ever making it really big, and is surely the hardest-working rock musician who never became a household name. If you want to hear a great example of John's earlier work, his first major release, 1991's 'Let It Scream' by The Scream, is a standout album. And it will soon be reissued on our sister label, Rock Candy Records. Hopefully this time round everyone will be singing John's praises and he'll finally get the credit he is due.

Words: Malcolm Dome. Photo: Getty Images/Ron Galella/WireImage

CLASSIC ALBUM SLEEVE



Dream Theater photographed in Chicago, 6 June 1993. L-R: Mike Portnoy (drums), James LaBrie (vocals), John Petrucci (guitar), Kevin Moore (keyboards), John Myung (kneeling, bass)

DREAM THEATER – 'IMAGES AND WORDS'

DATELINE: 7 JULY 1992

Art Director **Larry Freemantle** opens the door on a truly memorable cover...

"BEFORE I GOT TO work on the design of 'Images And Words' I sat down with the band and found that they had a whole list of things they wanted on the cover, all of which related to the lyrics. An image of the words, I guess. They were a bright group of guys and had a really clear idea about the cover concept, so my job was pretty much to take their information on board and deliver their vision. When you ask some groups what they want for a cover, they can be vague or totally unsure until they see something. The Dream Theater guys weren't like that at all. They were much more decisive.

"As far as I recall, the record company didn't have any influence or input into what the album would look like. It was all the band's ideas, but it wasn't like there was going to be anything controversial on it, so there weren't going to be any fights.

"MY OVERALL aim was to give the cover the composition of a classical painting, something you might see in a museum. I may have done a thumbnail sketch of what it would be like and how all the various elements would be arranged. These were the days when we were all just changing from analogue to digital, so the overall image was created as a collage; very mixed media.

"There was a place I knew of called Access Images that did digital photographic composites. They shot all the elements, scanned them and then built the composition digitally. It was just before Photoshop went mainstream, so we were still doing things the old school way to an extent, and 'Images And Words' was kind of both analogue and digital. Although I ended up with a transparency, the image was actually created digitally. All in all it took about a month to create the cover.

"I'M A commercial artist and commercial artists are basically cooks. Your job is to put all the ingredients together and hope the band like what you make. You have to be a bit of a chameleon. It's about what the *client* wants, not so much what *you* want. I believe Dream Theater were happy with the results. I certainly enjoyed working with them and went on to do the cover for their next album, 1994's 'Awake', the cover for 'The Silent Man' single from the same album, and the 'A Change of Seasons' EP in 1995.

Interview by John Nicholson. Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

"One thing I'm really glad I did was bring in a calligrapher to create the Dream Theater logo. It looks like a font, but it isn't. It was hand-lettered by a guy named John Stevens and is very strong and eloquent. The band have used it on all of their subsequent albums and I'm really proud of that."

"The flaming Sacred Heart with the crown of barbed wire thorns wrapped around it was created as a physical object and then photographed, and this symbol became a kind of trademark for Dream Theater. The heart was the inspiration for the original cover of the 'Live Scenes From New York' album, which featured a flaming apple with a silhouette of the Twin Towers visible in the flames. It was a terrible coincidence [the album was first released on 11 September 2001] and of course the band pulled the sleeve and replaced the apple with the Dream Theater Majesty symbol."

"The idea we were trying to get across with the sky/cloud ceiling was that it was supposed to be daytime in the room itself, but night-time outside. That was a nod to the surrealist painter René Magritte."

"It was the band's idea to have the girl on the cover as the primary focus. The photographer for this project was a guy called Dan Muro. He took all of the photos for the cover, including the little girl. I don't know who she was, but I think Dan just cast her for it. I don't believe she was related to the band."

"The four poster bed, walls, window, and floor are all taken from vintage books of engravings. They formed the background onto which all of the other elements were placed. I suppose the end result looks a bit 'of its time' compared to how we do things today, but I like the way everything works as part of a collage."

"I seem to remember that there were lots of references to night and day, and the sun and the moon in the songs on the album. So that must have been why they asked for a full moon, yet with the sun seen to be coming up as well."

"The band were involved with the creation of the artwork from A to Z. They were the ones who said there had to be a vase of flowers featured. I wish all my clients were so clear about what they want!"

DREAM THEATER – 'IMAGES AND WORDS'

Released: 7 July 1992 Album length: 57.04

1. Pull Me Under *(8.12) – Lyrics by Kevin Moore*
2. Another Day *(4:23) – Lyrics by John Petrucci*
3. Take The Time *(8:20) – Lyrics by Dream Theater*
4. Surrounded *(5:30) – Lyrics by Kevin Moore*
5. Metropolis – Part I: 'The Miracle And The Sleeper' *(9:32) – Lyrics by John Petrucci*
6. Under A Glass Moon *(7:03) – Lyrics by John Petrucci*
7. Wait For Sleep *(2:31) – Lyrics by Kevin Moore*
8. Learning To Live *(11:30) – Lyrics by John Myung*

LINE UP:
James LaBrie – lead vocals
John Petrucci – guitar, background vocals
Kevin Moore – keyboards
John Myung – bass
Mike Portnoy – drums, percussion, background vocals on 'Pull Me Under'

All music composed by Dream Theater except 'Wait For Sleep' by Kevin Moore. David Prater – producer and mixer. Doug Oberkircher – engineer and mixer. Steve Regina – assistant engineer. Ted Jensen – mastering. Recorded between October and December 1991 at Bear Tracks Studios, Suffern, New York, and The Hit Factory, New York City.

WHICH CLASSIC SLEEVES WOULD YOU LIKE US TO DISSECT?
EMAIL: EDITORIAL@ROCKCANDYMAG.COM

YOU COULDN'T MAKE IT UP

INSANE TALES FROM THE ANNALS OF ROCK

Love/Hate L-R: Jizzy Pearl (vocals), Jon E. Love (guitar), Skid Rose (bass), Joey Gold (drums)

JIZZY PEARL CRUCIFIES HIMSELF ON THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN

DATELINE: 1 JUNE 1992

WHY ON EARTH DID THE LOVE/HATE SINGER GO TO EXTRAORDINARY LENGTHS TO SUSPEND HIMSELF ON THE FAMOUS LANDMARK?

"LOOK," EXPLAINS VOCALIST JIZZY Pearl. "In the late '80s we'd do literally anything to stand apart from other bands. We'd do all sorts of weird photo shoots just to be noticed. I can remember one with a gallows, even! There were so many young hopefuls out in LA all pushing to be signed to a big label, so we did what we had to do to stand out from the crowd. One day back in the '80s we were driving past the Hollywood sign and I came up with this crazy idea. I decided that one day the four of us should crucify ourselves on that sign, as some sort of blood sacrifice to the gods of rock'n'roll! Nothing really came of it for a while, but a few years later [bassist] Skid [Rose] came up with the idea of doing a Love/Hate movie and that I would be the star. He shot a lot of footage on the road and then it was suggested we should revive the crucifixion idea, but just with me."

IT WOULD be a great publicity stunt, of course. But how could the band – Pearl, Rose, drummer Joey Gold and guitarist Jon E. Love – pull off such a spectacle? Putting their thinking caps on, the group assembled a contraption that would allow Pearl to be lowered onto the sign using a drop ladder and a pulley. After a few dry runs played out on the roof of the loft where the guys all lived, they got the timing down to a mere eight minutes.

"The night before we were due to go for it we loaded the cross into the back of my truck," says drummer Joey Gold. "At four in the morning we drove out to the Hollywood sign and hiked up the mountain, each of us hauling a piece of the cross behind us, until we were right alongside it. We buried the pieces in the trees and bushes. The next day – 1 June 1992 – at around four in the afternoon we met up at the bottom of the mountain where the sign stands and ran up to the top. We assembled the cross, then Jizzy and I climbed up the back of the 'Y' in HOLLYWOOD, which is about six storeys high. I got the pulley working and dropped the rope down, then everyone pulled on the rope. I'll never

forget seeing that cross slide up the 'Y'! Once it was in position I tied it off and everyone else then ran off as planned, leaving just Jizzy and me. I lowered the drop ladder for Jizzy to climb down, but because it was so high, Jizzy froze. I told him to get his ass down that ladder – and eventually he did!

"I climbed down the mountain myself and was amazed when I stopped and looked back to see Jizzy high above me on the cross. It was unreal!"

ACCORDING TO Gold, within just 15 minutes of the singer being hoisted onto the 'Y', the LA air was buzzing with helicopters, as no less than eight TV channels were alerted to what was going on and started covering the stunt. How long was Jizzy on the cross? Some have said it was 90 minutes, while others reckon it took no more than 20 minutes before the police turned up. What isn't in doubt, though, is that the services of the fire brigade were required to remove the singer from the cross. As soon as Jizzy was brought down, the LAPD did their stuff and the singer was duly arrested, but was then eventually released on bail.

MOST PEOPLE assumed that Love/Hate had concocted this daringly dumb-assed stunt to promote their second album, 'Wasted In America', which had been released three months earlier. Not the good folk at local TV station Channel 7, though, whose live report suggested that Jizzy dangling from the cross might be some sort of protest linked to an environmental summit that was happening in Rio de Janeiro at the same time. How wrong can you be?! The entire crucifixion scene was only intended to be a scene in the planned Love/Hate movie. Naturally, the band weren't averse to the idea that the major publicity they gained out of the incident would boost Love/Hate's profile and lead to more album sales, but truth be told that never really happened. And to a certain extent the band believe that their crazy idea actually backfired.

"Far from seeing this as a great marketing exercise, our record company, Columbia, were really angry with us for doing it," says Jizzy. "While this might not have been the entire reason why we were dropped from the label soon after, I do feel it was a contributory factor."

WHAT'S EVEN worse is the fact that the planned Love/Hate film that had inspired the stunt in the first place never happened either.

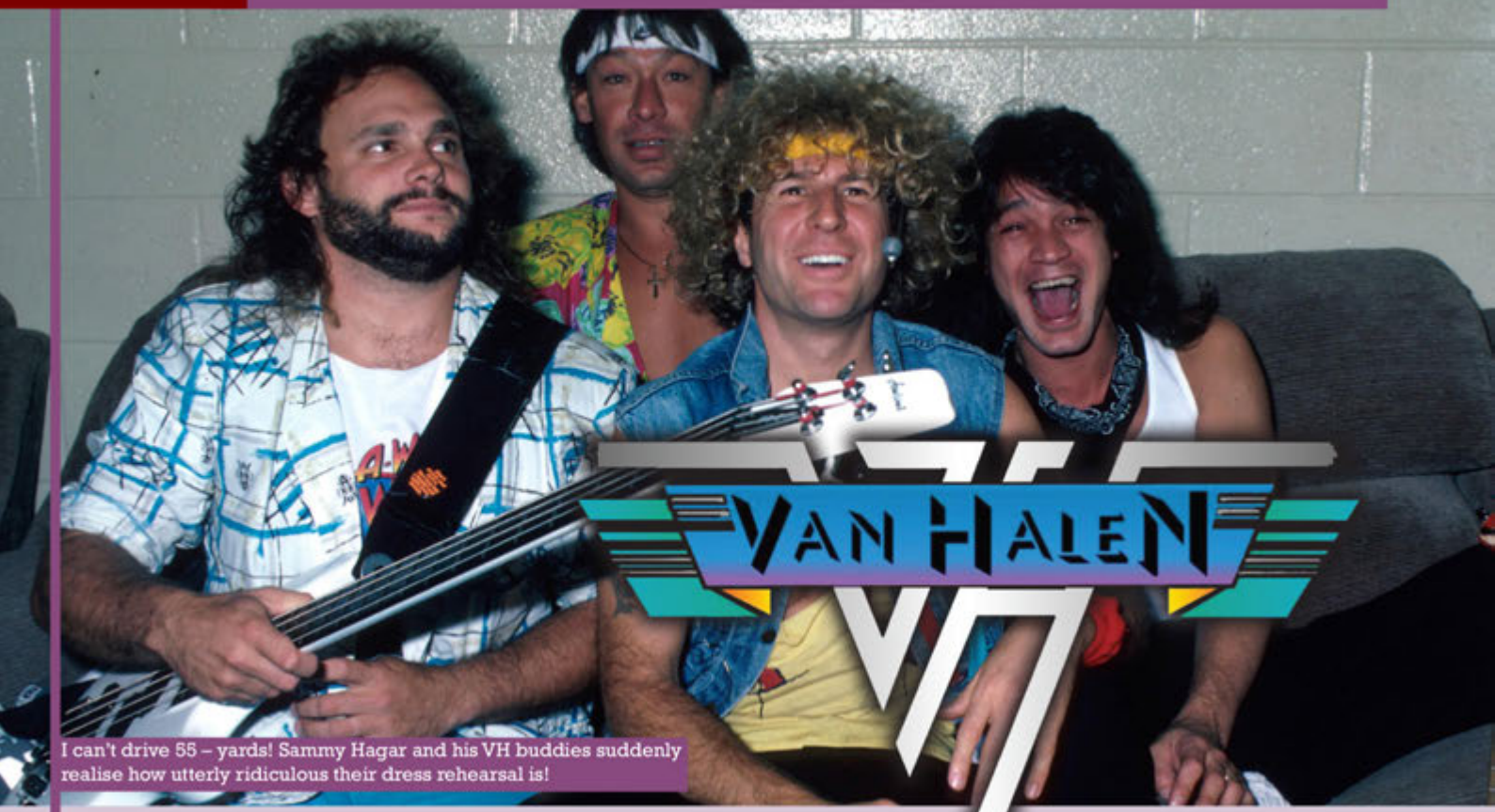
"I've no clue what happened to that project," laughs Pearl. "Maybe one day it will get finished and appear, and I'd like that. At least then the performance art of our crucifixion scene would get to be seen!"

If you want to check out how the 1992 US news channels covered this barmy story, just go to YouTube and type in 'Jizzy Pearl on the Hollywood sign'.

ds by Malcolm Dome. Cartoon by Christophe Sénégas. Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

BIZARRE MEETINGS WITH BIZARRE ROCK STARS...



I can't drive 55 – yards! Sammy Hagar and his VH buddies suddenly realise how utterly ridiculous their dress rehearsal is!

Dave Reynolds whisks us back to 1988 and the moment they needed to rehearse a 200-yard drive when **Van Halen** decided to the stage!

HAVING RELEASED THE 'OU812' album earlier in the year, the summer of 1988 found Van Halen – with Sammy Hagar fronting – headlining what was essentially a travelling American version of the 'Monsters of Rock' concept, appearing in football stadiums across the States from late May to the end of July. The tour – also featuring the Scorpions, Metallica, Dokken and Kingdom Come – arrived in East Rutherford, New Jersey on 26 and 27 June for two shows at the enormous Giants Stadium. That very weekend I happened to be across the Hudson River in New York City interviewing Kiss and Cinderella for *Kerrang!* magazine, and the two bands' record company, Phonogram, had kindly arranged for me to attend Monsters, given that the Scorpions and Metallica were on the same label in the UK.

HANGING OUT in the hospitality area backstage, I noticed two familiar figures among a small gathering of dolled-up girls and music biz liggers pathetically hanging around Van Halen's dressing room door. Just as I was trying to get my head around the fact that the two familiar faces belonged to Kiss members Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley, a Chevy van with blacked out windows screeched up in front of the dressing room door. Security guards immediately sprang into action in the most over-the-top fashion to clear the way.

THE DOOR suddenly flew open and the four members of Van Halen dashed out of the dressing room and jumped straight into the van, which then sped off, only to stop at the foot of the steps leading to the stage, a maximum of 200 yards away! As if that wasn't insane enough, nobody actually got out of the van, which then turned around and headed straight back to the dressing room. The band then jumped out again and ran as fast as they could back into the same dressing room they'd left less than a minute before.

I COULDN'T believe what I'd just seen. Why on earth did Van Halen perform what I can only describe as a 'stage call rehearsal' a full hour before they were due to perform? What purpose did it serve to be driven a few yards to the stage in a backstage area where security was tight and regular fans couldn't get in? This was years before Eddie Van Halen's hip problem, and at that time he was still walking short distances or, if necessary, using a golf buggy.

AS IT so happened, the dress rehearsal didn't improve their timekeeping, and Van Halen ended up going on late anyway. Maybe more dry runs were needed after all? Had this been David Lee Roth-era VH, nothing would've dragged me from Giants Stadium that night. But wanting to catch Britny Fox opening for Frehley's Comet at the Limelight back in NYC, I left early and hitched a ride back to Manhattan with Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich, in something altogether less flash than the van VH had used for their epic journey. Lars laughed when I told him about the dry run saga. "Don't you ever go doing any of that stupid rock star stuff," I said to him. I *think* he took my advice!

EVER HAD A BIZARRE ENCOUNTER WITH A ROCK STAR? LET US KNOW AND IF YOUR STORY'S MAD ENOUGH, WE'LL INTERVIEW YOU ABOUT IT.

EMAIL: EDITORIAL@ROCKCANDYMAG.COM

Photos: Getty Images/Ann Clifford/The LIFE Picture Collection

MY FIRST GIG

DATELINE: 23 SEPTEMBER 1978, ANAHEIM, USA

Black Sabbath in 1978: "I loved everything about them"

"THE ATMOSPHERE WAS FRENZIED!"

STRYPER GUITARIST **OZ FOX** ON WITNESSING HIS FIRST MAJOR ROCK SHOW, 'SUMMERFEST', FEATURING A STELLAR LINE-UP OF BOSTON, SABBATH, VAN HALEN, AND HAGAR...

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ON SALE MONDAY

Oz Fox performing with Stryper in Las Vegas, January 1987

"I WAS IN MY late teens when I went to my first ever rock concert, attending a huge festival at Anaheim Stadium – where the California Angels played baseball – to see Boston, Black Sabbath, Van Halen, and Sammy Hagar. Although Boston were the headlining act I was more into the other bands at the time. I was a huge Black Sabbath fan – they were my absolute favourite band – and I loved both Van Halen and Sammy Hagar. I thought Boston were kinda pop-ish before I went to the gig, although I soon changed my opinion after I'd seen them play. I really enjoyed their show and they definitely had a unique sound.

"THE ATMOSPHERE in the stadium was frenzied. Those kinds of shows always drew huge crowds who were there to party, all pushing each other to get to the front. The rock world back then was all about having fun, and trying to get away with as much as you could without getting arrested!

"I remember that both Sabbath and Van Halen blew my socks off! They were amazing. But then again, Sammy Hagar was too. Van Halen were really taking off at this point in time. It was just before they released their second album [1979's 'Van Halen II'] and the band came out on stage at Anaheim wearing jumpsuits. They'd hired look-alike skydivers to jump from a plane and make it seem like the band members had just dropped out of the skies and parachuted into the stadium!

"SABBATH STILL had the original line-up with Ozzy on vocals at this show and I loved everything about them. I was already playing guitar by then and used to bunk off high school to play along to their records at home. I think I saw them one more time after this show while Ozzy was still in the band.

"When Stryper began to get noticed Ozzy was offended by what we were doing and made some comments in interviews about how he thought we were fake. That bummed me out, because I was such a huge fan. But I did get to meet him before a show in 1990 and shook his hand. Sharon saw me and said, 'I thought you hated Ozzy?' I told her that was far from the case. I love the guy!

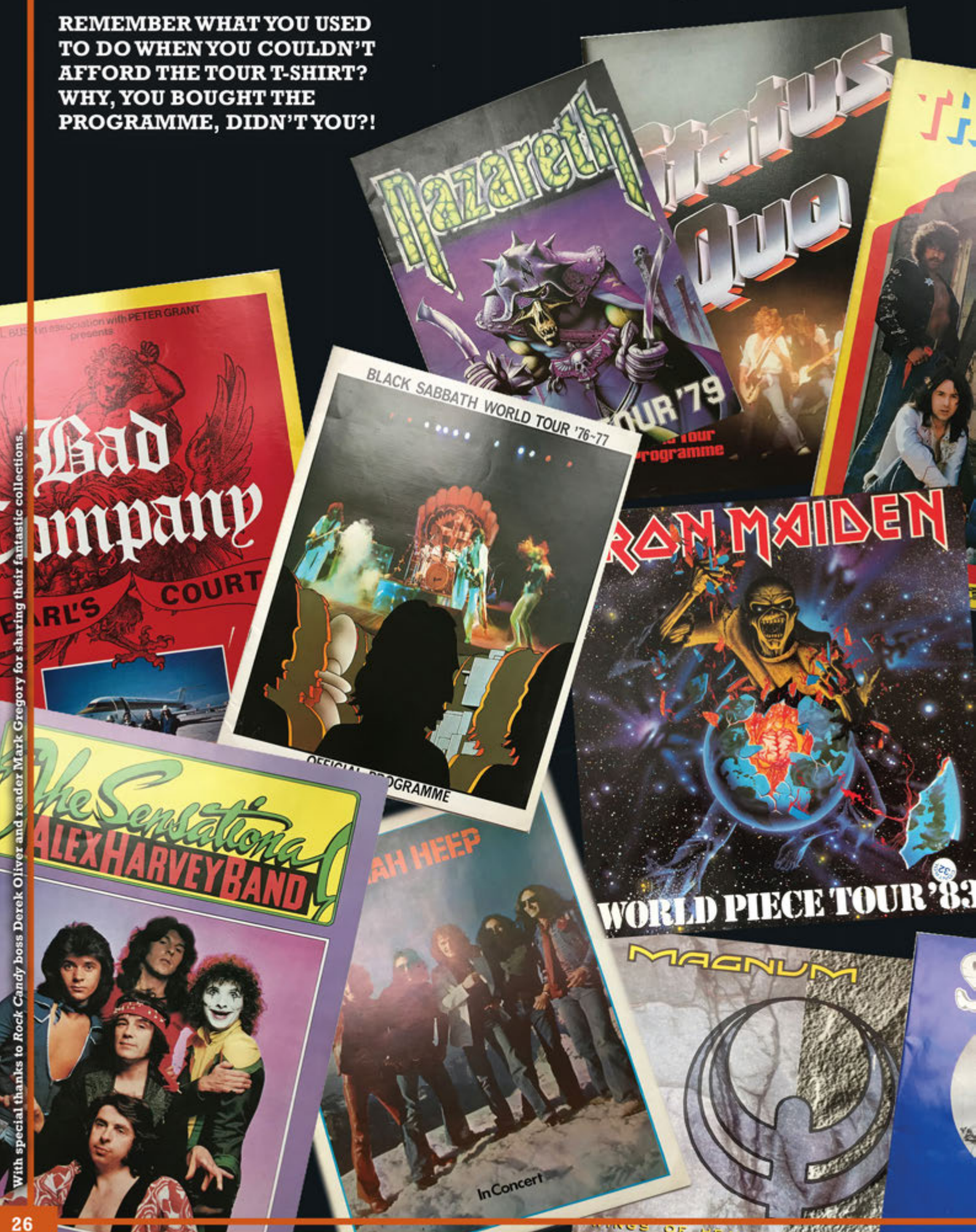
"IT'S STRANGE how things can come full circle. In 2008 Stryper played a benefit show in New England for survivors of The Station nightclub fire. [Stryper frontman] Michael [Sweet] was connected with Boston at the time and we ended up jamming with them on 'Peace Of Mind'. It was kinda surreal to play with those guys. Gary Pihl played guitar in Sammy Hagar's band back in '78 and I talked to him about the Anaheim show. He told me that was the first time he ever met Tom Scholz and, of course, a few years later Gary would join Boston. [Eddie Van Halen would also meet future VH vocalist Sammy Hagar for the first time at the Anaheim show too – Ed.]

"THAT ANAHEIM gig was a hugely memorable experience for me. It showed me that if I stuck at it as a guitar player, honing my skills, then I could get to a similar level playing huge shows. By the grace of God, I was able to do it!"

Interview by Dave Reynolds. Photos: IconicPix/David Plastik; Getty Images/Richard E. Aaron/Redferns

TOUR PROGRAMMES

REMEMBER WHAT YOU USED TO DO WHEN YOU COULDN'T AFFORD THE TOUR T-SHIRT? WHY, YOU BOUGHT THE PROGRAMME, DIDN'T YOU?!



With special thanks to *Rock Candy* boss Derek Oliver and reader Mark Gregory for sharing their fantastic collections.

SLADE
SLADE
MONSTERS OF ROCK
AC/DC
Whitesnake
SLADE
Uriah Heep
Firefly Tour 77
IN LIZZY
AC/DC
FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK
Monsters
Of Rock
DONINGTON PARK
18th AUGUST
1984
Rush
a farewell to kings
Rush
World Tour 77-78
Exclusive Concert Edition
BLUE OYSTER CU
SASSAFRAS
RIDING HIGH
BRITISH TOUR
SUMMER '76
Slippery When Wet
BON JOVI

DARK DAYS

TRAIL

Replacing fan favourite Bruce Dickinson as the lead singer in **Iron Maiden** in 1994 was never going to be easy for former Wolfsbane man **Blaze Bayley**. But the vocalist claims Maiden's more progressive approach to metal started with him. *Malcolm Dome* investigates...

SOON AFTER IRON MAIDEN released 'The X Factor' in October 1995 – their first album with Blaze Bayley on vocals – bassist and band leader Steve Harris stormed into the London offices of *Kerrang!* magazine. The bassist was looking for journalist Chris Watts, keen to shake him by the throat. The reason? Watts had put 'The X Factor' into his listening playlist in the new issue of the magazine. But he'd credited Maiden's label as 'EMI Comedy Department'. And Harry was *not* amused!

Maiden members might not have seen the world of 'The X Factor' this way. But there can be no denying that this was how a lot of people felt about the band at the time. It was bad enough that the band's much-admired vocalist Bruce Dickinson had quit in 1993. But replacing him with former Wolfsbane frontman Bayley was seen as a terrible error.

"It's true that the press were writing Maiden off in the UK, saying the band were finished," admits Bayley today. "And that happened in some other parts of the world too. But there were also a lot of countries where the fans loved what the band did while I was the singer. Diehard Maiden fans stuck with us and sent a message to everyone. '*We* will decide when it's over.'"

This mirrored Harris's own determination to ensure Maiden carried on. During the last tour with Bruce in 1993, Harris was adamant when he told *Kerrang!*: "Maiden were together for eight years before Bruce joined. Why shouldn't we continue without him? If you think we should give up, then f**k you!"

IT'S A fair point. The group that had defined the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal, then quickly outstripped

Photo: Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns

Iron Maiden, 1995 vintage. L-R: Nicko McBrain (drums), Steve Harris (bass), Blaze Bayley (vocals), Dave Murray (guitar), Janick Gers (guitar)

BLAZER

it, had surely earned the right to do whatever they pleased. The band *would* continue. A new vocalist *would* be found. And that vocalist turned out to be Bayley Alexander Cooke.

There have been different stories over the years about how Bayley joined Iron Maiden. One claims the band contacted him to offer him the job without an audition. Another claims that Maiden encouraged the singer to attend an audition, even though he'd never applied for the job. But it's down to Bayley himself to reveal the truth.

"I did actually send in a tape," he says. "Just like a lot of others singers obviously did. As a result of that I got a call to come down for an audition. But I had a slight advantage over most of the other candidates because my band, Wolfsbane, had supported Maiden in 1990 on the British dates of the 'No Prayer On The Road' tour. And I'd given Steve Harris a Wolfsbane CD then.

"Everybody auditioning had to learn ten songs that were part of the Maiden live set at the time, including 'Hallowed Be Thy Name', 'The Trooper', 'The Number Of The Beast', 'Wrathchild' and 'The Evil That Men Do'. I went down for my audition with no real expectation of actually getting the job. My attitude was that, whatever happened after, at least I'd be the vocalist in Iron Maiden for an hour!"

> "I WENT DOWN FOR MY AUDITION WITH NO REAL EXPECTATION OF ACTUALLY GETTING THE JOB. MY ATTITUDE WAS THAT, WHATEVER HAPPENED AFTER, AT LEAST I'D BE THE VOCALIST IN IRON MAIDEN FOR AN HOUR!"
>
> **BLAZE BAYLEY**

Much to his amazement, the singer was called back for a second try-out.

"I was very surprised to be asked back," admits Bayley. "But the second time I had to go down to a recording studio. The band wanted to see how I dealt with a different sort of pressure to playing live. Again, I had no expectations, so was very relaxed about everything. Had I really believed I could get the job, then I'm sure I'd have been a lot more tense. So that probably worked ►

DARK DAYS

in my favour. I knew that I'd done my best, and that was OK. I never dreamed I'd get a call saying I had the job. But that's what happened!"

BAYLEY OFFICIALLY joined Maiden in 1994 and feels what helped him most was the fact that he sounded nothing like his predecessor.

"I had a different type of voice to Bruce and I think that's what Maiden were looking for. Don't get me wrong. I have enormous respect for Bruce. He's an icon of rock and metal, and a massive influence on many singers, including me. But the band didn't want someone who sounded just like him. They wanted to take things in a fresh direction and Steve must have heard something in my voice that appealed to him."

> "WE PUT 'THE X FACTOR' OUT WHEN GRUNGE WAS AT ITS HEIGHT. IF YOU LOOK AT WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO A LOT OF OTHER ESTABLISHED METAL BANDS AT THE TIME, THEY WERE ALSO STRUGGLING TO SELL COPIES OF NEW ALBUMS."
> **BLAZE BAYLEY**

For some established bands, a new member coming in would be treated as no more than a hired hand. But with Maiden and Bayley it was a very different scenario.

"I felt like an equal from the moment I joined," insists the vocalist. "There was never any hint that they saw me as merely an employee. I was accepted straight away and was made to feel part of the family."

IN 1995, talking to MTV's *Headbanger's Ball*, Harris explained that the band had no songs written for the next album before Bayley was confirmed as the singer.

"One of the first things Blaze said was, 'How much stuff have you already got written?'" explained Harris. "But we literally had nothing. We wanted to wait until we had Bruce's replacement on board before beginning to get songs ready, so that the new guy would be part of the writing process. Blaze asked what direction we wanted to go in musically, but that was also an open book. We never have a direction worked out in advance. We see what comes out. The great thing was that Blaze was already an experienced songwriter so he could slot into that side of things with no trouble."

Bayley gives a lot of credit to Harris for helping him become a *better* writer, though.

"I learnt so much from him," he says. "Steve showed

Blaze: "I learnt so much from Steve."

Photos: Getty Images/Brigitte Engl/Redferns; Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns

me how to take an idea that's in your head and develop it during rehearsals and then take it into the studio. It was such a big learning curve for me to see the way he worked. Sometimes with Wolfsbane I struggled to make a thought I had in my head come to fruition. But thanks to Steve I was able to see how it was possible to do that, and it's stood me in good stead ever since. Up until then, my writing had been a matter of luck, really.

"But Steve did a lot more than teach me how to become a better writer," he continues. "He gave me so much advice during those early days in Maiden. He became a mentor, right down to telling me what beers to drink in certain countries! Steve has an uncompromising loyalty to the idea of Iron Maiden and because I was a part of it he had loyalty to me."

The band's approach to songwriting was a surprise to Blaze, nevertheless.

"They never got the songs together at huge volume in a rehearsal room," he reveals. "They started out acoustically, with the voice the loudest instrument you could hear. That way, the texture of the vocals was very important to the way the songs turned out, something I learnt from my time with them."

BAYLEY'S FIRST album with Maiden, 'The X Factor', was recorded at Steve's home studio in Essex and was co-produced by Harris with Nigel Green. After its release on 2 October 1995 it was generally felt that the album was a commercial disappointment. The reality is somewhat different. In the UK 'The X Factor' peaked at number eight in the charts and sold over 60,000 copies. There were strong showings in a number of other European countries, too, including Sweden where the album made it to number four. The States was a different matter, though. 'The X Factor' became the first Maiden studio album since the band's 1980 debut to fail to make the Top 100, stalling at a dismal number 147. Bayley believes there was a good reason for a dip in album sales that was entirely out of the band's control.

The band outside Steve Harris's legendary pub at his home in Essex.

"We put 'The X Factor' out when grunge was at its height," he says. "If you look at what was happening to a lot of other established metal bands at the time, they were also struggling to sell copies of new albums. Everyone suffered and I don't think it's fair to say that Maiden's stock dropped any more than a lot of other bands."

Bayley also strongly denies that the band lost a lot of fans the minute Bruce Dickinson was no longer there.

"I'll admit there were certain countries where the record didn't get a great reaction. But I was happy that there were many parts of the world where it did really well. Let me tell you something. At the same time as the British media were telling everyone Maiden's time was up, we were doing a sell-out arena tour across Spain, playing to 10,000 people every night. It didn't feel like a band that had run out of steam.

"There were plenty of gigs on that tour where there were loads of fans at the front of the stage singing all the words to the new songs. But it was a different era. Some fans weren't prepared to accept me and I did get people shouting, 'We want Bruce'. I expected that and I took it in my stride. But you talk to Bruce and he'll tell you that even at the height of Maiden's success in the '80s he had some fans shouting for Paul Di'Anno! For certain diehards I would never be the right man to sing in Maiden. But for other diehards Bruce Dickinson was never the right person for the band either!"

Talking in '95, Harris insisted 'The X Factor' had been well received by fans.

"It's a strong album," he said. "The best we've done for ages. And everywhere we go on tour fans already know the words and are singing along."

As for how Bayley had acquitted himself in the live environment, again the bassist was effusive.

"He has a combination of nervousness and confidence onstage and I like that. It gives him an edge."

MAIDEN RECORDED a new song called 'Virus' for a 1996 compilation, 'Best Of The Beast', and two years after that the band released their second album with Bayley, 'Virtual XI'. It was the lowest charting studio album Maiden had ever had in the UK, reaching number 16. Global sales, meanwhile, failed to reach the million mark. Again, the singer is quick to highlight a significant mitigating factor, something that once again was out of Maiden's control.

"Every band was seeing a big drop in their sales," Bayley insists. "We seemed to have entered an era when albums just weren't selling in the same quantities they'd done for years before. I would defend 'Virtual XI' as a good record in its own right. We wrote the music we wanted. We never thought of trying to be more poppy, or of fitting in with trends. We always did things our way in Iron Maiden and what really excited me was that I believed 'Virtual XI' set us up perfectly for the next album. I was very confident it would be the best one I'd done with the band. I was coming up with lots of musical and lyrical ideas. I know we were on the verge of doing something great."

Sadly for Bayley, though, he never got to make that third album. Summoned to a band meeting in January of 1999 he was told he was out of the group.

"I understand why they did it," he says. "Like a lot of other bands – Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Judas Priest – they were under pressure to get back their classic era vocalist, because that was seen as the only way to get fans back on board. I talked to 'Ripper' Owens about what happened to him when he was let go by Priest so that Rob Halford could return, and he feels the same way I do. It was the logical thing for the band to do and you can't argue against it. In a way, Iron Maiden ►

DARK DAYS

had no choice but to do what they did."

The same year that Bayley left Iron Maiden, Harris effectively confirmed Maiden's thinking: "In many parts of the world we were still very strong," he said. "But it's true that in Britain and America we'd lost fans. And we had to do something to get them back."

DID BAYLEY sign a 'non disclosure agreement' when he left, preventing him from talking about certain, maybe sensitive, aspects of the band?

"Yes, I did sign such an agreement," he admits. "But it really was no big deal at all. I had no problems with it, because there are idiots out there who'd go to the tabloids at the first opportunity to tell all for some cash. That was never going to be me, but I understood why Maiden wanted to protect themselves. It was sensible, logical and fair. To be honest, it wasn't a case of me being able to embarrass them by revealing certain things. But the inner workings of any band should always remain private. That's what they were protecting."

Although Bayley went to the fateful meeting with no idea of what was about to happen, with hindsight he now feels he got a warning sign *en route*.

"I took a taxi to the meeting and we got stuck behind a car with a number plate that had '666' as part of it! Now there will be those who'll scoff at this, but I swear it's true. I'm very superstitious and I do believe Eddie is a presence hanging over the Maiden camp – I feel it. Just after I joined the band I had a crash on my motorbike, badly injuring myself. And when that happened the tachometer read '666'. See what I mean?"

MAIDEN DRUMMER Nicko McBrain explained that he believed Bayley had been overburdened on tour.

"He struggled doing some of the songs," said McBrain in 1999. "Especially the longer ones, and that began to affect him. Maybe it was our fault for not realising he couldn't cope with the demand."

The vocalist himself disagrees with this assessment.

"I never had any problem doing the songs we selected for the set," insists Bayley. "In fact, I would have been happy to do any Maiden song. The one I really would have loved to do was 'Wasted Years', but that never worked out."

One thing that delights Bayley is that when the band reunited with Dickinson and guitarist Adrian Smith and reintroduced the revamped line-up to the fans on the 1999 'Ed Hunter Tour', Maiden actually did three songs from the Blaze era – 'The Clansman', 'Man On The Edge' and 'Futureal'.

"There are bands who get their old singers back and refuse to do songs recorded without them," says Bayley. "But Maiden aren't like that. They recognised the value of those songs and Bruce had no problem doing them."

What this proved was that, despite leaving the band, Bayley remained on good terms with the other members. This was particularly true of Steve Harris, who was and is very supportive of his one-time singer.

"Steve couldn't have been more helpful," enthuses Bayley. "In fact, when I did my 'King Of Metal' solo album in 2012 I was struggling for money to complete it. So Steve let me use his own studio for nothing. Not only that, but he also got Tony Newton, his sound engineer, to help me."

SINCE LEAVING Maiden, Bayley has released nine studio albums under the name Blaze or Blaze Bayley, as well as doing occasional Wolfsbane shows. He also feels that he's still tight with the Maiden family.

"Once you've been in Iron Maiden, the fans never forget you," he says. "Yes, I know there are some Maiden fans who hate me and believe I ruined their heroes. But the majority are very positive about my time in the band. There are those who say that I am *the* Maiden singer. They first got into the band when I was with them and have always stayed loyal to what I did. I've had fans telling me that either 'The X Factor' or 'Virtual XI' is their favourite Iron Maiden album.

"It seems that my period with the band is regarded a lot more affectionately now than it was at the time. This is partly because the albums have been reassessed and people who loathed them back in the day now admit that they're actually good. When they were both remastered for vinyl reissue a few years back the process brought out a lot of the atmosphere and colour that was missing on CD. The new versions are so much better, and now people realise what we were doing.

"These days, Maiden have gone in a much more progressive direction, and for me this all started with 'The X Factor'. The dark lyricism we've seen began then as well. So there's a close link between my period in the band and what's happening now."

> "FOR CERTAIN DIEHARDS I WOULD NEVER BE THE RIGHT MAN TO SING IN MAIDEN. BUT FOR OTHER DIEHARDS BRUCE DICKINSON WAS NEVER THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE BAND EITHER!"
> **BLAZE BAYLEY**

Ask Bayley which of the songs he recorded with Iron Maiden he's most proud of and he is quick to pick out two numbers.

"There's 'Judgement Of Heaven' from 'The X Factor' that's really unusual," he says. "And then there's 'The Clansman' from 'Virtual XI'. When you get the quiet passage in that song just right, there's no feeling quite like shouting *'Freedom! Freedom!'*. It's very special. I still play a lot of Maiden material live. And it gets a great reaction from the fans."

CAN BAYLEY ever envisage a situation where he'll get up onstage to blast out one or two songs with Iron Maiden again?

"I'd love to do it," he says. "I'm always ready if the call comes. There's always been a good relationship between me and the band, so that's no problem. And I know there are quite a few fans who'd be happy to see it happen. These days there are so many anniversary tours going on, so maybe there's a chance something will be put together in the future. Next year is the 25th anniversary of me coming into the band, so who knows? But it's all out of my hands. The decision is totally down to them. I'm just pleased that I got the chance to be part of the Maiden story for a few years. That made such a huge difference to me and to my career. Whatever the fans think of those albums, good or bad, being in Iron Maiden changed my life."

Photo: Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns

"MY PERIOD WITH THE BAND IS REGARDED A LOT MORE AFFECTIONATELY NOW THAN IT WAS AT THE TIME. THIS IS PARTLY BECAUSE THE ALBUMS HAVE BEEN REASSESSED AND PEOPLE WHO LOATHED THEM BACK IN THE DAY NOW ADMIT THAT THEY'RE ACTUALLY GOOD."

Blue Öyster Cult in the studio, 1979. L-R: Eric Bloom (stun guitar and vocals), Donald 'Buck Dharma' Roeser (lead guitar and vocals), Albert Bouchard (drums), Allen Lanier (keyboards and guitar), Joe Bouchard (bass)

THE MAKING OF 'MIRRORS'

Legendary producer Tom Werman made just the one album with Blue Öyster Cult, but it was an experience he'll never forget. He opens up about working with the band in an exclusive interview with Xavier Russell.

Photo: Getty Images/Lynn Goldsmith/Corbis/VCG

LONG SINCE LABELLED 'THE Thinking Man's Heavy Metal Band', Long Island's Blue Öyster Cult made a virtue out of coming from left of centre. The band's first three albums – 'Blue Öyster Cult' (1972), 'Tyranny And Mutation' (1973) and 'Secret Treaties' (1974) – are treasure troves of the weird, with song titles including 'I'm On The Lamb But I Ain't No Sheep', 'She's As Beautiful As A Foot' and 'Mistress of the Salmon Salt (Quicklime Girl)'. But there's a lot more to this band than a few strange song titles. BÖC can be heavy, for sure. 'Cities On Flame With Rock And Roll', 'Harvester Of Eyes' and 'Hot Rails To Hell' provide the proof. But they can also be strangely moving, as beautiful numbers like 'Astronomy' and 'Then Came The Last Days Of May' appear from out of the ether and wrap themselves around your mind.

IT WAS easy to imagine that the destiny of the original Cult would be to provide pleasure for connoisseurs only. But 1976's 'Agents Of Fortune' album and the monstrously popular hit single '(Don't Fear) The Reaper' turned Blue Öyster Cult into a *bona fide* arena act – with the spectacular laser shows to prove it.

The band's next release, 1977's 'Spectres', couldn't match the success of its predecessor. Sure it went gold in the States, but despite 'Godzilla' being a big FM hit the general verdict on the rest of the material was that it was somewhat lame. The following year's single live release, 'Some Enchanted Evening', put the band back on track with over a million US sales alone. But by the time the band reconvened to begin work on their sixth studio album, 'Mirrors', a seismic shift in the BÖC camp was about to occur.

UP TO this point all of the band's recorded output had been produced by combinations of the team of manager Sandy Pearlman, Murray Krugman and David Lucas, either with or without the group. For the first time the new album would see a recognised outside producer take the helm.

> "I HONESTLY THOUGHT DONALD'S VOICE WAS MORE APPROPRIATE FOR SEVERAL OF THE SONGS THAT ERIC HAD PLANNED TO SING. I FELT BAD ABOUT TELLING HIM THAT."

The man chosen for the job was Epic Records in-house man, Tom Werman. Aged 34 at the time, Werman already had a string of impressive production credits behind him, including Cheap Trick, Ted Nugent and Molly Hatchet. Long since retired from the music business, Tom now runs a luxury bed and breakfast operation in Lenox, Massachusetts called Stonover Farm. But he still remembers his Cult days...

BÖC already had a well-established production team, so how did you end up working with the band on the recording of 'Mirrors'?

"At that time I was still a staff producer at Epic, which was part of CBS. The band asked me to do the record because they were signed to the Columbia label, which was also part of CBS. At that time I was only allowed to produce acts on CBS, so I'm pretty sure that one of the main reasons the group chose me was because they didn't have to pay me anything! The fact that I'd had a bunch of hits behind me and a very good track record won't have hurt."

Was the band's manager and producer, Sandy Pearlman, OK with his boys going with someone else for the first time?

"I think he was. I already knew one of the band's other production guys, Murray Krugman, because he worked at CBS. I didn't know Sandy, because he didn't. I met Sandy a few times, though, and he was cool with me producing the record, because he'd just taken over managing Black Sabbath at that time. Looking after Sabbath and Blue Öyster Cult meant he was very busy. ►

EYEWITNESS Dateline: 1979

When did you first meet the band members?
"I didn't know any of them before the 'Mirrors' project, and I'd never even seen the group live, despite them having a huge following in the New York area. But I did meet up with them before we started recording and they played me a lot of demos of their songs. I was really surprised at how refined they were as people. The whole Blue Öyster Cult vibe was a good piece of marketing."

What did you make of the guys?
"They were actually great people. Given the way their albums were put together, both the music and the image, you would have thought they were a bit... well, 'cultish'. Don't fear the reaper and all that... I guess Allen Lanier made the group a bit different. He was more of a poet, really. I didn't see how he belonged in the band to be honest. Plus, I didn't understand why they had a piano in the first place.

Where did you think the real talent in the group lay?
"I'd say with Donald. Buck Dharma was great. He's a wonderful guy, very funny, and certainly one of the most under-appreciated guitarists in the world. He's a superb guitar player, like a cross between Carlos Santana and Mark Knopfler. He's smooth, lyrical, precise, and he's got a great sound. Plus, his compositions are brilliant. I can't say enough good things about him. Plus, as soon as Donald sang I said, 'Wow, this guy's good. This is great.' We had a lot of fun together, Donald and I. Buck would have me on the floor. I'd be in the control room, he'd be in the studio and we'd trade funny stories about the past. He was a producer's dream."

"BUCK DHARMA IS A SUPERB GUITAR PLAYER, LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN CARLOS SANTANA AND MARK KNOPFLER. HE'S SMOOTH, LYRICAL, PRECISE, AND HE'S GOT A GREAT SOUND."

Did you have a brief about what kind of record the band wanted to make?
"Not really. I don't recall there being any big arguments or disagreements about which way to go on 'Mirrors'. Typically I wanted more arrangements, more production, and more pop than hard rock'n'roll. And we did do plenty of arranging on 'Mirrors', so you hear a lot of rich textures and tricks. For example the track 'The Vigil' is a *tour de force*. The musical themes in that song are so totally different from one another. You have the material and then you try to do what the material needs. We really took advantage of recording technology to make that record."

Did you have any involvement in organising song structures prior to recording?
"I would change the basic tracks. For example, I might change a kick drum configuration, or I'd tell Albert not to come in on a certain cymbal, but rather on another one. Maybe I'd suggest that an intro to a song should be half as long, stuff like that. All of that took place at the pre-production stage, but you have to be very careful about what you do at that point. You don't want to rehearse the life out of a song. You want the guys to be excited about making music in the studio."

The band had enjoyed some major success in the past? Was there a lot of pressure on them – or you – to deliver a smash album?
"Well, there was always pressure to deliver a hit, but I didn't feel it any more than usual working on 'Mirrors', because once we got into the studio I could see the band was up to the task. With most of the groups I'd worked with before, you needed to be able to pull a few rabbits out of the hat. The exception to that was Ted Nugent's band. Those guys were good. But I was very impressed with both the musicianship and attitude of Blue Öyster Cult. They were a real professional outfit."

You used three different studios to record 'Mirrors'. How and why were the places chosen, and what did each studio have to offer?
"Well, the Record Plant in LA was my home. I made 16 albums there and so I knew Studio B, where we recorded 'Mirrors', back to front. But there was a practical reason for changing studios. At the time you needed a huge room to get the basic tracks down. That was going to cost you $3,000 a day back then. But once you had those basic tracks down you'd move on to do guitar and keyboard overdubs, vocals and all the rest of it. And at that point you didn't need a big place. You'd work in smaller studios that were probably half the cost. Then there would also be simple availability issues. So to answer your question, cost and availability probably dictated how and where we recorded 'Mirrors'."

Did the band have a particular way of working?
"By that point I was pretty experienced in the studio and had a routine and certain things I liked to do. There weren't any arguments about that as far as I can recall. For example, we'd double all the rhythm tracks and let the guitar players hear the results. Once I'd convinced them that the methodology worked and that it sounded good, then things went pretty smoothly."

Were there any standout numbers for you?
"There was a certain way I liked to order things, so I'd go for the best song as the opener. In this case it was 'Dr. Music'. Then the second best song – 'The Great Sun Jester' – would follow it. And finally I'd put the next best

song as the opener on side two, which turned out to be 'The Vigil'. It was all vinyl back then, remember...

"'Dr. Music' was kinda pop and very commercial. They were clearly thinking about that song as a single, even though the first single actually turned out to be 'In Thee', which is also a great song. I thought both 'The Great Sun Jester' and 'The Vigil' were fantastic, particularly in terms of arrangements.

"Personally, I loved the last minute of 'Moon Crazy', which is played double time and features an incredible solo by Donald. For me that's the highlight of the entire record. But overall the songs had a really nice swing, and that's mainly down to Albert Bouchard and his brother Joe as the rhythm section. When he got going Albert reminded me a little bit of Ringo Starr."

Allen Lanier (left) and Eric Bloom giving it some of that good ol' live BÖC vibe

Were there any times when you disagreed on things?
"Yes. I honestly thought Donald's voice was more appropriate for several of the songs that Eric had planned to sing. I felt bad about telling him that, but I preferred to have the record come out better and Eric be pissed off, than please Eric and compromise on quality. That meant Eric spent quite a lot of time sitting around and that was a little uncomfortable. But that was the only negative for me."

Did the record company have a lot of input into what was going on in the studio, or were you left alone to get on with it?
"They left me alone all the time. People think that the record company guys were constantly looking over your shoulder, but they weren't. Occasionally somebody from A&R would come down and we'd play some stuff for them and they'd go back and say 'Yay, it sounds great down at the studio.' But that was pretty much all you needed to do to keep them happy. We used to call it 'The Dog And Pony Show'. They'd come in, we'd get some drinks and have a little listening party. We knew exactly what we were going to play them and would prepare a rough mix of the tracks, like a little show reel, so they wouldn't have to sit around while we put up every song on the multi track and mixed each one."

How did everyone feel about the finished record?
"I think the band members were all happy. I usually remember the tough moments, but I don't remember there being any of them on 'Mirrors'."

Which of the tracks were you most pleased with?
"'The Vigil', definitely. It's a great song that really picks you up and off you go. It has a really wonderful end with a long, slow fade and Buck really plays his ass off. That was the best I ever heard him play. But overall, I was really impressed by his arrangements and the sophistication of his songs. They were very thoughtful and very mature. It was high class rock'n'roll."

How did everyone feel about the way the album performed commercially?
"I don't think it did that well and it's not one of the band's better known albums, probably because it was too much of a departure. I think it probably should have been a bigger seller. It was kind of like their version of the Stones' 'Their Satanic Majesties Request'. They wanted to try something a little different. It's strange, because I think the band most likely wanted to be a little harder on 'Mirrors', but for some reason they wound up being considerably softer."

Would you have been interested in working with the band again after 'Mirrors'?
"Absolutely. It would definitely have been fun to work with Donald again. Of all the bands I ever worked with – on over 50 albums – I'd say he was one of the three or four most enjoyable people I ever worked with."

How do you look back on the whole experience now?
"I look back on 'Mirrors' as a positive experience. I enjoyed it, but I feel that my association with Blue Öyster Cult came and went very quickly. When I listen to 'Mirrors' I'm impressed by what we did together. There are quite a few moments where I'm genuinely knocked out by what we came up with, even if sometimes I don't have any idea how we actually did them. But yes, I'm happy overall. I think I rose to the occasion and as far as I'm concerned, if Donald liked it then I'm delighted."

BLUE ÖYSTER CULT
'MIRRORS'
Released: 19 June 1979

LINE UP
Eric Bloom – stun guitar, vocals
Donald 'Buck Dharma' Roeser – lead guitar, vocals
Allen Lanier – keyboards, guitar
Joe Bouchard – bass, vocals
Albert Bouchard – drums, vocals

Produced by Tom Werman
Recorded: Kendun Recorders, Burbank, California; CBS Recording Studios, New York City; The Record Plant, Los Angeles, California

TRACK LISTING

Dr. Music (Joe Bouchard, Donald Roeser, Richard Meltzer)
The Great Sun Jester (Eric Bloom, Michael Moorcock, John Trivers)
In Thee (Allen Lanier)
Mirrors (Donald Roeser, Bruce Abbott)
Moon Crazy (Joe Bouchard)
The Vigil (Donald Roeser, Sandra Roeser)
I Am The Storm (Joe Bouchard, Ronald Binder)
You're Not The One (I Was Looking For) (Albert Bouchard, Caryn Bouchard)
Lonely Teardrops (Allen Lanier)

Photos: Getty Images/Lynn Goldsmith/Corbis/VCG; Getty Images/Waring Abbott

NIGHT RANGER

Night Ranger rocking a particularly strong look in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 3 August 1985. L-R: Jeff Watson (guitar), Kelly Keagy (drums and vocals), Jack Blades (bass and vocals), Alan Fitzgerald (keyboards), Brad Gillis (guitar)

BOOGIE

Everybody knows that **NIGHT RANGER**'s 'Sister Christian' featured in the film *Boogie Nights*, but there was a whole lot more to this platinum-selling American rock band than just one great song. ***Xavier Russell*** hooks up with original members **JACK BLADES, BRAD GILLIS** and **KELLY KEAGY** to talk about the many highs and occasional lows of a stellar career spanning more than 35 years...

BEFORE THE RATHER RUDE interruption of 1982's Bay Area Thrash movement, San Francisco was the hotbed for AOR in America. Bands such as Journey, The Doobie Brothers, Eric Martin Band, Jefferson Starship, Steve Miller Band and Eddie Money all ruled the airwaves on both AM and FM radio in the late 1970s and early '80s. Night Ranger – the last of the great 'ER' bands – were one such outfit, mixing a heady brew of insistent hard rock with undeniably catchy and commercial ballads. The most well-known of the 'softies', the unforgettable 'Sister Christian' from their 'Midnight Madness' album, became a Top Five hit in the US in 1984, but would gain a whole new lease of life fully 13 years later when it featured as the musical backdrop to one of the most memorable scenes of cult movie *Boogie Nights*. Who can forget the sight of actor Alfred Molina, coked up to the gills and with his dressing gown open to reveal his budgie smuggler underpants, interrupting a drug deal in his mansion to air drum to the Night Ranger classic? The band – whose best-known line-up featured bassist and vocalist Jack Blades, guitarists Brad Gillis and Jeff Watson, drummer and vocalist Kelly Keagy and keyboardist Alan Fitzgerald – would end up selling more than 10 million albums worldwide. Yet Night Ranger, with Blades, Gillis and Keagy now augmented by guitarist Keri Kelli and keyboardist Eric Levy, are still recording and touring, and are still happy to discuss a career going back a long, long way.

NIGHT!!

WHAT WAS THE MUSIC SCENE LIKE IN SAN FRANCISCO WHEN YOU FIRST GOT TOGETHER ALL THOSE YEARS AGO?

Kelly Keagy: "It was really vibrant there back in the late '70s and early '80s. But what was really interesting was that there was so much varied music going on in the Bay Area at that time, from Santana to The Tubes. It was really inspiring."

SO WERE YOUR FIRST MUSICAL VENTURES EQUALLY ECLECTIC?

Jack Blades: "Well, Brad and I formed a band called Rubicon way back in 1977, and yes, musically it was very different to Night Ranger, with much more of a funk rock groove. We released our debut album, 'Rubicon', [on 20th Century Fox Records] in 1978 and our high point that year was playing at the California Jam 2 festival alongside Aerosmith, Ted Nugent and Foreigner. Bizarrely, Rubicon also opened for Motörhead at The Old Waldorf in San Francisco? Can you imagine what that was like?! A seven piece white band driven by horns opening for Lemmy? It was awesome. Kelly joined the band in 1979 and became our touring drummer, but when Rubicon eventually broke up we formed a group called Stereo and started playing all the small clubs in San Francisco. Huey Lewis and the American Express – as Huey's band was called back then – would come and see us. So would Eddie Money, Billy Satellite and Neal Schon from Journey."

Kelly: "It was a real mix of musical styles, including R&B, AOR and hard rock."

BY 1980 YOU'D RECRUITED ALAN FITZGERALD AND JEFF WATSON TO THE GROUP'S RANKS AND HAD DECIDED TO CHANGE THE BAND NAME TO RANGER, IS THAT RIGHT?

Brad Gillis: "That's right. As far as I remember we drew names out of a hat and ended up pulling out the name Ranger, so went with it. It really wasn't any cleverer than that, to be honest."

HOW DID YOUR DEAL WITH BOARDWALK RECORDS COME ABOUT?

Brad: "We were good friends with Gary Pihl, and ►

Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

NIGHT RANGER

You can still rock in America. Night Ranger appearing on the *American Bandstand* TV show, 16 January 1984

Jack and Brad rock out in Chicago, 5 August 1985

he had played guitar in Sammy Hagar's band for many years. He had an eight-track studio set up at his house in the North Bay at Santa Rosa and we ended up camping out at his place, recording demos there for something like two weeks."

Jack: "At one point Gary suddenly had to go off on tour with Hagar. He threw us the keys and simply said, 'Just don't burn the house down!'"

Kelly: "We finished those demos (without burning his house down!), then did some others in a couple of different studios. We started shopping them around to various labels and eventually Boardwalk Records, which was started by [former Casablanca Records boss] Neil Bogart, signed us."

BUT EVEN BEFORE RANGER HAD PUT OUT ANY MATERIAL YOU WERE PLAYING GUITAR WITH OZZY OSBOURNE, WEREN'T YOU BRAD? HOW ON EARTH DID THAT HAPPEN?

Brad: "When we had finished the demo and started touting it around LA to all the different labels, there was a lag time of about eight months, I guess. I just wanted to play, but as Ranger we didn't want to be playing clubs to 10, 20 or 50 people, because we had no clout. So instead I decided to put a band together called the Alameda All Stars, who are actually still active today, and we started playing Ozzy songs in the set. Pat Thrall, who played guitar with Pat Travers, is the brother of Preston Thrall, who drummed in the Alameda All Stars. Pat saw me playing Ozzy's songs in the band, and Pat had played with Tommy Aldridge in the Pat Travers Band. Are you still with me? At this time Tommy was playing with Ozzy, and Tommy mentioned me to Sharon Osbourne, who is Ozzy's wife and manager, of course. They needed a guitar player, so I got the call to go out with Ozzy.

"During the time that I was on the road with him we'd gone into the studio at odd moments and finished the Ranger record. I recorded the 'Speak Of The Devil' live album with Ozzy, but towards the end of that tour [bassist] Rudy Sarzo quit the band to rejoin Quiet Riot and I ended up quitting to come back to Night Ranger, because by that time we had a record deal. It worked out great for me, because I came off the road with Ozzy and went straight back out again with Night Ranger, opening for Kiss."

Jack: "Ozzy and Sharon would come down to the studio while we were putting the finishing touches to our first album, 'Dawn Patrol', and he was very encouraging towards Brad and the band. It was strange, because we released 'Dawn Patrol' the very same week that Ozzy released 'Speak Of The Devil', in November of 1982. It was great for Brad, though, because he had two records out at exactly the same time."

SO HOW DID RANGER BECOME NIGHT RANGER?

Brad: "We were getting ready to release 'Dawn Patrol' when one day I opened up *Billboard* magazine and there was a two-page ad for a band called The Rangers. They were a country band with a 20-odd year history behind them, so we pretty much had to change the name there and then."

Kelly: "And we already had this song, 'Night Ranger', on the album..."

Jack: "So I called everyone up and said, 'Come on, we can just call the band Night Ranger.' The other guys said, 'You think so? That name sucks! It's terrible!' But that's what we were kind of stuck with."

Brad: "There were already 10,000 albums printed up with the band name of Ranger on the cover! The record company had to dump them all in the trash... even though it seems that a few copies did escape... I've actually seen a copy of the Ranger album going for $800 on eBay!"

THE 'DAWN PATROL' ALBUM PICKED UP SERIOUS RADIO AND MTV SUPPORT STRAIGHT OUT OF THE BOX, DIDN'T IT?

Brad: "What was great about the music scene at that time was that TV and radio had actually started getting into heavier rock. Our first single, 'Don't Tell Me You Love Me', ended up all over the radio all across the country. MTV had recently launched and they picked up on the song too."

Jack: "We made a video for that tune on an ultra-low budget with some friends who borrowed all the gear on weekends from the film school at the University of California in LA. The only prop we had was a piece of railway track, so we made the most of it! MTV was this fledgling thing, but even then everybody was starting to watch it. So we gave them our video, and I think all they had was us, Duran Duran's 'Hungry Like The Wolf', and maybe two others. MTV started showing us on heavy rotation at least 13 times a day!"

> "WE HAD ABOUT A DOZEN HIT VIDEOS ON MTV THROUGHOUT THE '80S, WHICH WAS GREAT FOR US. IT PUT OUR FACES ON THE MAP AND REALLY HELPED OUR CAREER, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE PULLED INTO A NEW TOWN, BECAUSE PEOPLE WOULD ALREADY KNOW WHO WE WERE."
> **BRAD GILLIS**

Brad: "We didn't really know what we were doing with videos back then and we relied on the directors to come in with their ideas. Luckily enough, though, we had about a dozen hit videos on MTV throughout the '80s, which was great for us. It put our faces on the map and it really helped our career, especially when we pulled into a new town, because by then people would already know who we were."

THE NIGHT RANGER SOUND WAS DEFINED BY THE BAND'S ABILITY TO SWITCH SEAMLESSLY BETWEEN TOUGH ROCKERS AND BIG BALLADS. WAS THAT A DELIBERATE PLOY?

Kelly: "That was just us and the way we worked. We love pop music, but we also love harder rock. We're all really big Thin Lizzy fans too, two lead guitar players and a bass player that sings. We love full-on rock'n'roll and yet we all love the Beatles for their melodies and harmonies."

Brad: "And because of this mix people didn't really know how to describe our sound. We weren't heavy metal and we weren't pop, so we came up with our own phrase – Stainless Steel!"

WERE YOU SURPRISED WHEN 'SISTER CHRISTIAN' FROM YOUR SECOND ALBUM, 1983'S 'MIDNIGHT MADNESS', WAS USED IN THAT LEGENDARY DRUG DEALING SCENE IN *BOOGIE NIGHTS*?

Kelly: "The director, Paul Thomas Anderson, was a big fan of the band, and he searched us out. The production company sent us a script explaining how ►

Photos: Getty Images/ABC Photo Archives; Getty Images/Paul Natkin

NIGHT RANGER

they'd like to use the song in the movie, but it was totally different to how things ended up in the finished version. Paul apparently loved our screeching guitar solos and I think that's why he got the actors to play air guitar and air drums in the scene that featured 'Sister Christian'."

Brad: "The scary thing was that we'd actually been in that very house where the scene was filmed with the guys from Van Halen. Thank God the '80s are over!"

Jack: "I went to see the movie with Kelly and my wife, Molly. When that 'Sister Christian' scene came up the three of us started sweating. It was like, 'Jesus, this is *way* too realistic. We've been in this guy's house!' But still, we're very happy that we're in *Boogie Nights* – unlike Mark Wahlberg these days!"

Brad: "It was great to be in a cool film like that. Night Ranger's music has been used in quite a few movies over the years, actually – *Sixteen Candles* and *Teachers* in 1984, *The Explorers* in 1985, and *Out Of Bounds* in 1986. Then in 1987 we were asked to write the title track for the Michael J. Fox movie *The Secret Of My Success*. That was big in our career too, because it was the title song from the film's soundtrack [and also appeared on Night Ranger's 'Big Life' album]."

"I WENT TO SEE *BOOGIE NIGHTS* WITH KELLY AND MY WIFE, MOLLY. WHEN THAT SCENE WITH 'SISTER CHRISTIAN' IN CAME UP, THE THREE OF US STARTED SWEATING. IT WAS LIKE, 'JESUS, THIS IS *WAY* TOO REALISTIC.'"
JACK BLADES

WHAT DID IT FEEL LIKE TO HIT PLATINUM STATUS AT A TIME WHEN SELLING RECORDS *REALLY* MEANT SELLING RECORDS?

Jack: "To me it was just, 'Let's sell enough records so they let us make another record.' We started off going out on a nine-month tour and then we suddenly started selling a few records and we were then on an 18-month tour. We were doing some marathon tours back in the '80s. It was a lot of work, but I never once thought, 'Oh let's go out and make a million bucks,' and I still don't think that."

SO WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE BAND STARTED SELLING FEWER RECORDS LATER IN THE '80S?

Jack: "After having three consecutive Top 30 albums in America, things started waning when we released 'Man In Motion' in 1988. Our keyboard player, Alan Fitzgerald, had recently left the band. And we were having real difficulties with our label, MCA, because after 'Sister Christian' they fell into the idea of going down the easiest route. 'Oh, it's Night Ranger. Let's release a ballad.' Ballads were us, of course, but they were only a *part* of us. MCA pushed us into a box and that box suffocated the band. I think that proved to be our downfall at that stage of the game. We all said, 'That's it. Let's all take a break and do something else.' So I went off and played with Damn Yankees for a while, and then Shaw/Blades after that."

Kelly: "For the 'Man In Motion' record MCA suggested that we use a song by an outside writer. They gave us a Russ Ballard number, 'I Did It For Love', that was yet another ballad. We deliberately hadn't turned in a ballad for that album, because at that point we wanted to rock – we were a rock band, after all! But they said, 'You can't put out a Night Ranger album without a ballad.' So they gave us a Balla(r)d and we were pretty much forced into doing it. After that Jack went off to form Damn Yankees, while Brad and I recorded another Night Ranger album, 'Feeding Off The Mojo', in 1995. But it was only when we got to 1997's 'Neverland' that the original line-up got back together."

SO WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS OF BEING IN NIGHT RANGER?

Brad: "For me it was going out and playing huge shows like Day On The Green in 1983 and the Texxas Jam in '85. When you've got 50-80,000 people in front of you, that's a high you can't express in words. It's pure emotion having so many people looking at you while you're soloing. You suddenly say to yourself, 'Oh my gosh. I better not screw up.' So that's the highlight for me, big audiences!"

Kelly: "Playing in different places outside the States, like Europe and Japan, was always a big thing for me. In 1985, right around the time when we were really taking off with our third album, '7 Wishes', we came over to Europe and did a huge stadium tour supporting Foreigner. Playing with those guys and getting to know them pretty well was really cool for me. You know, I was opening for my idols."

Jack: "My high point was when we were presented with our first platinum album for 'Midnight Madness'.

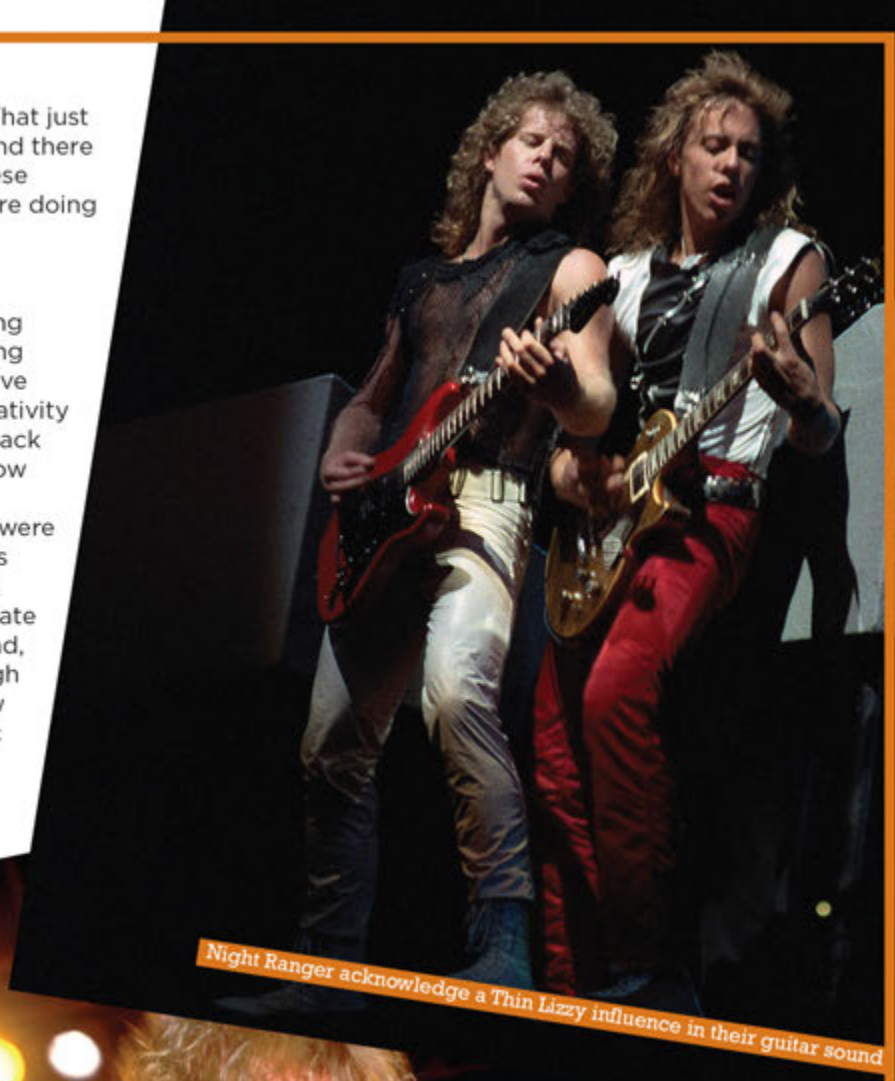
Selling a million of anything is huge, isn't it? That just hit me straight in my brain. I looked around and there were Brad, Kelly, Alan and Jeff holding up these platinum discs and I felt validated that we were doing something right."

AND LOW POINTS?

Brad: "About 10 years ago things weren't going well for us. We had a few internal clashes going on within the band, and because I am a positive person I wanted to get away from all the negativity that surrounded us. I really wanted us to be back together and doing what we're doing now. Now things are so much better."

Jack: "The lowest point for me was when we were playing at the end of 1989 and everything was going wrong for the band. I hated it. I'd come home from touring and I'd say to my wife, 'I hate this band.' It wasn't really that I hated the band, though. There were individual clashes – though not with anyone in this room! It was a real low point for me, but even at that point the music didn't suck."

Kelly: "For me it would be around 2006. For almost a year and half we were in limbo. We got letters in the mail telling us somebody was suing us. I'll never forget how that felt. Then we were on a plane going to a gig and we still had to play with band members who were suing us, and I just looked over at Jack across the aisle from me and he had his head in his hands looking really depressed. I thought to myself, 'This is the worst time of my life right now.'"



Night Ranger acknowledge a Thin Lizzy influence in their guitar sound

ALL THAT'S IN THE PAST, NOW, FORTUNATELY, AND YOU'RE STILL OUT THERE PLAYING. PLUS LAST YEAR'S ALBUM, 'DON'T LET UP', HAS BEEN REALLY WELL RECEIVED. HOW DOES THAT FEEL?

Jack: "Really great. We get to make music without any interference from our record label, Frontiers. We take our time when we make our records today and that's a nice position to be in. And of course we still love touring the world. We do 70-80 shows a year now, and it's a whole lot of fun again. Let's face it, we're a lucky band!"

Only in the '80s! Jeff Watson (left) plays a signature guitar that simply defies description

Photos: Getty Images/Chris Walter/Wirelmage; Julia Goode; Paul Natkin

NIGHT RANGER

Photo: Paul Natkin

"OUR FAVOURITE NIGHT RANGER TUNES!"

JACK, BRAD AND KELLY EACH CHOOSE THEIR FIVE PERSONAL CATALOGUE HIGHLIGHTS...

JACK BLADES

'When You Close Your Eyes' *(from 'Midnight Madness', 1983)* – "My absolute favourite Night Ranger number. I really love the feel of this song."

'Don't Tell Me You Love Me' *(from 'Dawn Patrol', 1982)* – "To my mind this tune is the absolute epitome of what Night Ranger's all about. It's great hard driving rock with excellent melodies."

'Forever All Over Again' *(from 'Neverland' 1997)* – "This number is from one of the albums we never play, but I really like it all the same."

'Sentimental Street' *(from '7 Wishes', 1985)* – "I really love the way Kelly sings this one."

'High Road' *(from 'High Road', 2014)* – "I like the way the whole band plays on this song. It really epitomises where Night Ranger is right now."

KELLY KEAGY

'Don't Tell Me You Love Me' *(from 'Dawn Patrol', 1982)* – "When we recorded the original Ranger demo that song wasn't even on it, but it's since become a mainstay of our live show."

'Can't Find Me A Thrill' *(from 'Dawn Patrol', 1982)* – "I distinctly remember my brother's first reaction to this song when I played it for him at 50,000 decibels. He just sat there open mouthed and amazed. That was great to see"

'Let Him Run' *(from 'Midnight Madness', 1983)* – "One of my favourite songs. Weirdly, it was the first thing we ever wrote, but it ended up on our second album!"

'Sentimental Street' *(from '7 Wishes', 1985)* – "Jack was supposed to sing the song, but our producer Pat Glasser said, 'Why don't you try it?' So I had a go at it, and it worked out great."

'Call My Name' *(from 'Dawn Patrol', 1982)* – "I know it's another ballad, but this was the first time that Jack sang one and it's a great song that's very much overlooked."

BRAD GILLIS

'Don't Tell Me You Love Me' *(from 'Dawn Patrol', 1982)* – "I love playing this number live. It's got that great aggressive feel that kicks ass."

'(You Can Still) Rock In America' *(from 'Midnight Madness', 1983)* – "It's a killer song that's always been a crowd favourite."

'Sister Christian' *(from 'Midnight Madness', 1983)* – "Quite simply an amazing tune, which is why it was such a huge hit for us back in the day."

'Touch Of Madness' *(from 'Midnight Madness', 1983)* – "It's a crazy song that shows our wild side. Plus I get the chance to pull out the wang bar at the end."

'Truth' *(from 'Don't Let Up', 2017)* – "It's new, it's fresh, and I just can't stop humming it in my head."

"GIVE IT A WIDE BERTH"

THE ONE SONG THE BOYS REALLY WISH THEY HADN'T RECORDED!

JACK BLADES

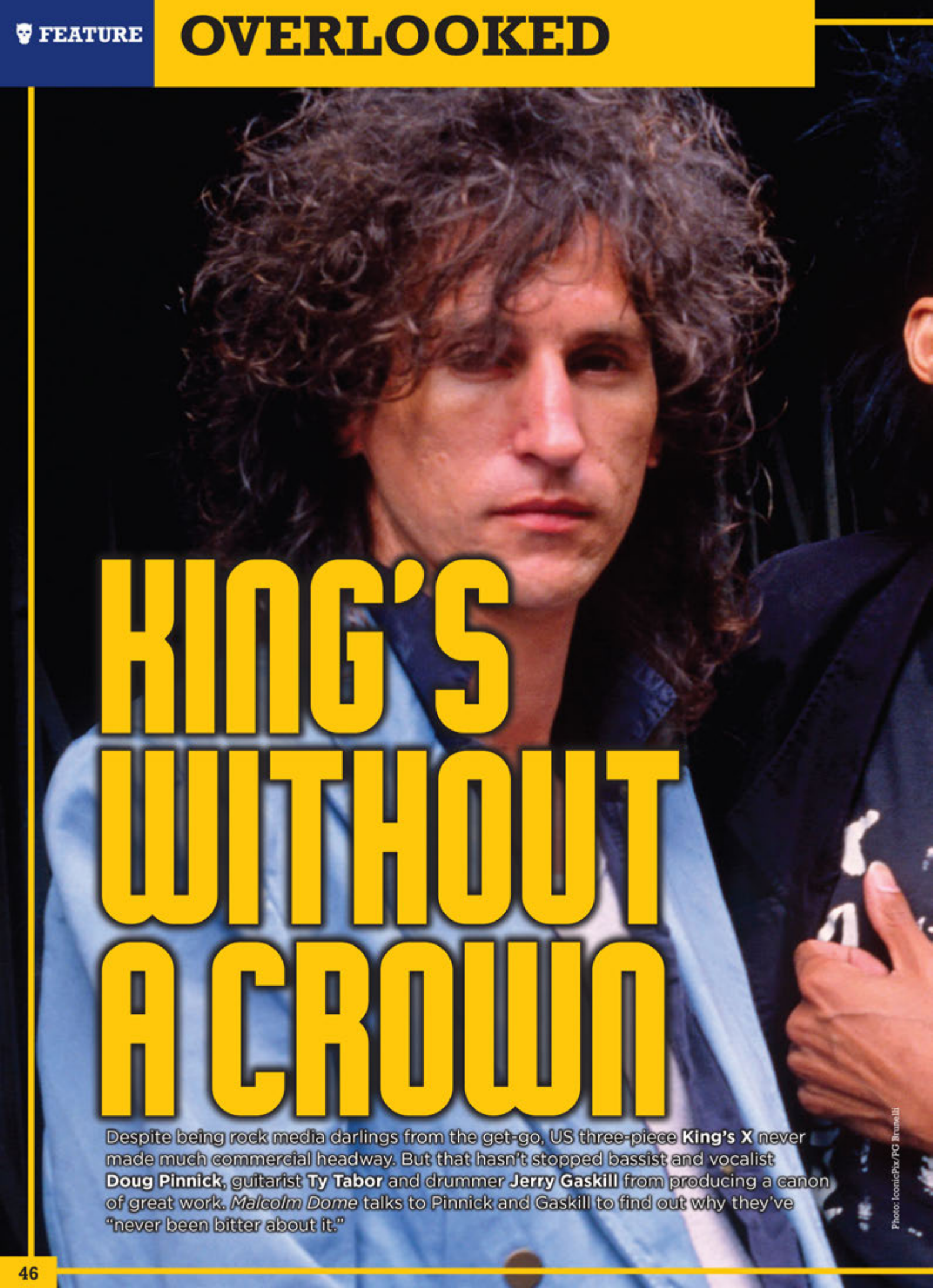
'I Did It For Love' (from 'Man In Motion', 1988) – "I didn't like the fact that we had it forced down our throats. I hated the video and I hated the song."

BRAD GILLIS

'I Did It For Love' (from 'Man In Motion', 1988) – "I'm with Jack. This doesn't even feel like a Night Ranger song."

KELLY KEAGY

'Chippin' Away' (from 'Midnight Madness, 1983) – "This song was kind of an afterthought, because we were under pressure to finish the album. I still hate it to this day."



KING'S WITHOUT A CROWN

Despite being rock media darlings from the get-go, US three-piece **King's X** never made much commercial headway. But that hasn't stopped bassist and vocalist **Doug Pinnick**, guitarist **Ty Tabor** and drummer **Jerry Gaskill** from producing a canon of great work. *Malcolm Dome* talks to Pinnick and Gaskill to find out why they've "never been bitter about it."

Photo: IconicPix/PG Brunelli

King's X photographed in London, 6 May 1990. L-R: Jerry Gaskill (drums), Doug Pinnick (bass and vocals), Ty Tabor (guitar)

KING'S X MADE A difference. A big difference to the way that rock music developed at the end of the 1980s. They were one of a handful of bands prepared to stand apart from the glammy, MTV types who'd dominated much of the decade.

"I would say that us, Faith No More, Jane's Addiction and the Red Hot Chili Peppers were all doing something different to the glam metal bands of the time," recalls King's X bassist and vocalist Doug Pinnick. "All four of us were pushing the boundaries and experimenting with different sounds and new musical ideas."

Yet while three of these bands went on to enjoy commercial success, the same can't be said for King's X. But Pinnick, for one, isn't going to speculate on why his group have never been able to translate critical acclaim into significant sales.

"You can spend ages trying to work out why we've never sold a lot of records, but that's a waste of time," he says. "We have to accept our failure to be commercially successful. There are probably a lot of reasons why, but it's not something we can change, even if we could understand why it happened. Jane's Addiction, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Faith No More all managed to get a lot of commercial attention too, but we're the ones who fell away. It doesn't bother me at all, though. And the same is true for Jerry [Gaskill, drums] and Ty [Tabor, guitar]. We have too much going on to sit there feeling sorry for ourselves."

> "WE NEVER HAD ANY DOUBTS ABOUT AGREEING A CONTACT WITH MEGAFORCE. IT WAS GREAT TO HAVE A LABEL BEHIND US WHO CLEARLY GOT WHAT THE MUSIC WAS ABOUT."
> **DOUG PINNICK**

PINNICK, TABOR and Gaskill first got together in the unusual setting of Springfield, Missouri, hardly a hive of musical activity. But none of them were actually from the area.

"I went to Springfield from Chicago, because I got the chance to play in a Christian rock band called Petra," remembers Pinnick.

"I come from New Jersey, and went to Springfield to go to school [Evangel College]," adds Gaskill. "Ty also went there to go to school, but he came from Pearl, Mississippi."

This was at the end of the 1970s and over the next couple of years, the three musicians kept crossing paths, occasionally getting the opportunity to play together in local bands. A Christian rocker called Phil Keaggy brought in Pinnick and Gaskill as his rhythm section ►

OVERLOOKED

Live on stage at the London Astoria, 6 May 1990

for touring purposes on the back of his 1980 album 'Ph'lip Side'.

"All three of us were involved in different bands during this period," recalls Gaskill. "And our paths just kept crossing. So in the end it seemed almost inevitable that we would form a group together." That finally happened when Pinnick, Gaskill and Tabor put together The Edge, originally a four-piece act.

"We had a guy, Dan McCollam, on rhythm guitar," explains Gaskill. "But he was only with us for a very short time. When he left, we brought in Kirk Henderson, who was a friend of Ty's from Mississippi. But again, he didn't stick around for too long. It was when he left that we decided that maybe we should just stick to being a trio."

DID BEING based a long way away from America's musical hubs of New York and Los Angeles play a role in the way King's X's idiosyncratic music developed? Pinnick thinks not.

"I don't believe it mattered where we were based," he says. "Our musical style owed nothing to what was going on in Springfield at the time. There were really only two bands in the area who were making any sort of impact back then, and they were both new wave, which was never a musical approach that appealed to us. I honestly feel the three of us would have sounded exactly the same wherever we were based."

Gaskill has a different point of view, though. "I think Springfield was a great place for us to start the band," he says. "The musical scene was actually a lot more vibrant than you might have expected. There were two big local bands – The Misstakes and Fools Face. The latter were especially happening at the time, and were almost like the Beatles around Springfield. Did these sorts of bands have an influence on us? I guess to a certain extent. But more important to us, really, was the way we pooled our individual inspirations. Each of the three of us brought our own tastes to the project, and the way the band evolved had a lot more to do with the way we brought together those personal influences."

> "WE HAVEN'T MADE MUCH MONEY FROM KING'S X, BUT WHAT WE DO HAVE IS A VERY DEDICATED AND LOYAL FAN BASE THAT BELIEVES IN WHAT WE'VE DONE. THIS BAND HAS NEVER FOLLOWED A FORMULA AND WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO STAY TRUE TO WHO AND WHAT WE ARE."
> **JERRY GASKILL**

BY 1983, The Edge had evolved into Sneak Preview and the band even put out an eponymous debut album. Recorded at local studio Dyna-Might with John Gott and the band producing, and released that same year, 'Sneak Preview' has now become something of a collector's item. One song, 'The Door', was reworked into a number called 'Picture' for the 1996 King's X album 'Ear Candy'.

"We pressed up 1000 copies of that album," says Gaskill. "But we ended up giving them away to fans rather than selling them. I'm not sure how many are still in existence."

"If you listen to the Sneak Preview album you can hear it's the same band that became King's X," adds Pinnick. "I'm not saying we'd found our style, because it would take us a couple more years to do that. But it was an important moment for us to be able to go into the studio and record our own songs. We didn't do it to get to a wider audience. All we wanted was to get our songs down on a record. We never sold any of the copies. We

just gave them out to the audience at gigs."

IN 1985, the band got a significant break when a label in Houston, Texas, offered them the chance to go out on tour as the backing band for one of their artists.

"Wayne Donowho and Darrell Harris, who ran Star Song Records, began to take an interest in what we were doing," explains Pinnick. "They asked us to come to Texas and become the backing band for one of their singers, a guy named Morgan Cryar. What's more, they were happy to pay for us to relocate from Springfield. It seemed like a good deal."

"Star Song Records really did believe in us," insists Gaskill. "And they thought being Morgan Cryar's backing band would help our profile. He was one of the biggest names on the Christian music scene back then. Moreover, Ty and Doug got to write some of the songs for his album 'Fuel On The Fire' [released in 1986] and they also did some backing vocals on that album. It all helped to raise our profile."

Doug Pinnick: "I have a huge fondness for our first album."

At the time it looked like Sneak Preview were becoming increasingly rooted in contemporary Christian music. But Pinnick claims that the three of them were becoming disillusioned with the way that particular scene was developing.

"We all realised we wanted nothing to do with this whole Christian music set-up," he says. "It became obvious to us that all these people were doing was using their faith as a marketing exercise. They were literally preying on people's faith and belief in God and using it to sell product.

"People actively involved in Christian music were doing no more than act as businessmen looking for ways to take your money off you. This wasn't about making connections to Christianity, or about making music that was celebrating God, Jesus, and a way of life. We soon decided that we wanted to have no part in that scene and we set out to try to distance ourselves from it as much as possible."

"We did get a big break being involved with Phil Keaggy, and then having the opportunity to work with Morgan Cryar," admits Gaskill. "But the more we saw of the way the Christian music scene worked, and the manner in which people's genuine faith was manipulated, the more we were determined to get away from it."

THINGS DIDN'T work out between Sneak Preview and Star Song Records as the label decided not to pursue their interest in the band. But what Star Song did was introduce the group to a man who would go on to become a crucial part of their story.

"The record company decided not to sign us for various reasons," says Pinnick. "I don't believe they knew what to do with the band. But they did set up a meeting with Sam Taylor, because they thought he could help us get a record deal."

At the time Taylor was the vice president of ZZ Top's production company. In the same way that [manager and producer] Bill Ham became the fourth member of ZZ Top, so Taylor would fulfil the same role with Sneak Preview, or King's X as they would shortly be known.

"We'd been trying to find a way to fit in for a while," recalls Gaskill. "Then one day, I think it was 1986, Ty played Doug and me a song he'd been working on called 'Pleiades' [that would eventually be recorded for the second King's X album, 1989's 'Gretchen Goes To Nebraska']. As soon as we heard the tune we knew that we'd found our sound. Through this one track everything just fell into place."

"The song had drop D tuning," adds Pinnick. "As soon as we heard it we knew this was what we should be doing. It was the moment when the band was truly born. We'd found our direction.

"Were we the first band to use drop D tuning? I'd say we were *one* of the first. But I also know that out in Seattle, Soundgarden were doing something similar. Their guitarist Kim Thayil was playing in a similar fashion to Ty, so I wouldn't claim we were the sole inventors of the technique."

"We did a four-track demo with Sam Taylor to send out to record labels," says Gaskill. "One of the songs we recorded was 'Sometimes', which ended up on the debut King's X album. Sam then sent the demo out to a whole bunch of record companies and told us not to play the tape to anyone and to just leave everything to him. But did we take any notice? Ha, ha, no we did not. Doug ended up playing the tape to his friend Greg Morrow, who was also the drummer in Amy Grant's band. He recommended that we send the demo to Megaforce Records, because he thought they'd appreciate what we were doing."

The tape was duly dispatched to the label's office in New York, and this quickly led to a deal. Megaforce had built their reputation signing thrash bands like Metallica and Anthrax, but despite not being part of that musical movement Pinnick, Gaskill and Tybor had no qualms about throwing their lot in with the label.

"Marsha Zazula ran the company with her husband Jon and she fell in love with our music," explains Pinnick. ►

Photos: IconicPix/PG Brunelli; Paul Natkin

OVERLOOKED

"She was so enthusiastic about us that we never had any doubts about agreeing a contact with Megaforce. It was great to have a label behind us who clearly got what the music was about."

SNEAK PREVIEW signed to Megaforce, but changed the band name almost straight away.

"It was actually Sam who told us we needed to come up with a different name," recalls Gaskill. "He felt that Sneak Preview wasn't right for us and suggested that we become King's X. The three of us just went along with it."

King's X went into Rampart Studios in Houston with Taylor as their co-producer to record what would be their debut album for Megaforce.

"It was taken for granted that Sam would produce," recalls Gaskill. "He'd already done the demo at the same studio. But Sam didn't have any impact on our sound. We already had that in place. He was there as a sounding board and to help us get what we needed."

"It took about a month to do the album," recalls Pinnick. "That was pretty much the norm back then for any young band."

"We worked very hard in the studio, doing 8-12 hours every day," adds Gaskill. "And we also did a lot of pre-production to get everything sorted out in advance."

Pinnick remembers that the album title – 'Out Of The Silent Planet' – was taken from a science fiction book.

"Ty, Jerry and Sam were all big fans of CS Lewis, who was very much a Christian-related author," he says. "*Out Of The Silent Planet* was the title of a novel he wrote as the first of three works in what's known as his Cosmic or Space Trilogy [the book *Out Of The Silent Planet* was published in 1938]. Everyone seemed very keen on it as the album title, so I went along with their idea." The band were so into CS Lewis that they revisited his work to find a title for the second album, 1989's 'Gretchen Goes To Nebraska', as Gaskill reveals.

"That was a phrase taken from the CS Lewis novel *Perelandra*, which was the second part of the trilogy. It just had the right feel."

"WERE WE THE GODFATHERS OF GRUNGE? I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S OVERSTATING IT, BUT THERE'S NO DOUBT WE OPENED PEOPLE'S EYES TO A NEW WAY OF PLAYING ROCK."
JERRY GASKILL

'OUT OF The Silent Planet' was released in March 1988 and received almost universal critical acclaim. It was even voted *Kerrang!* magazine's album of the year for '88, ahead of such high profile albums as Queensrÿche's 'Operation: Mindcrime', Metallica's '...And Justice For All' and Slayer's 'South Of Heaven'.

"We were amazed and delighted to get such positive reviews in the press," reveals Gaskill. "It was fantastic to know we'd struck a chord with so many in the media." Yet the album only reached number 144 in the US album charts. The journalistic goodwill towards the band didn't translate into big sales.

"I was shocked by how well the album was received by journalists," says Pinnick. "But on the other side of the coin nobody was coming to see us, and sales figures for the album were very poor. We seemed to be one of those bands who were critical darlings, but that was as far as it went!"

DESPITE THE public indifference at the time Pinnick vividly remembers how certain bands really took notice of what King's X were doing.

"We did shows in Seattle and a lot of young bands would come out to see us," he explains. "Soundgarden were already doing something similar to us, but I know the guys from Alice In Chains watched us. And was it just coincidence that they suddenly changed their approach? Those guys were a Kiss-inspired band before we came on the scene and then suddenly they went in a totally new musical direction. I can't say we were the band that started the entire grunge revolution, but we definitely played a part in it."

"I've heard it said that grunge didn't really start in Seattle, but rather in Houston!" laughs Gaskill. "I know for a fact that Layne Staley [of Alice In Chains] was inspired by us, because he told me. And the same is also true of Jeff Ament from Pearl Jam. He's often said that hearing King's X was very important in the way he began to understand the music he wanted to make.

"So were we the godfathers of grunge? I don't know if that's overstating it, but there's no doubt we opened people's eyes to a new way of playing rock. Yet we never managed to get the sort of success others who came after us enjoyed. That's the way things sometimes work out. We've never been bitter about it."

KING'S X appeared to be moving in the right commercial direction – albeit slowly – when 'Gretchen Goes To Nebraska' made it to number 123 in the American album

charts and to number 52 in the UK. 1990's 'Faith Hope Love', meanwhile, broke into the Top 100 Stateside, reaching number 85, while 1992's eponymous fourth album peaked at number 46 in the UK. However, this was as good as it got for King's X. None of their 12 studio albums to date have been really big sellers, but Gaskill is philosophical about it all.

"One thing we've always managed to do is to stay true to what we want to do musically, and that's important to all three of us. We haven't made much money from King's X, but what we do have is a very dedicated and loyal fan base that believes in what we've done. This band has never followed a formula and that has meant that we've been able to stay true to who and what we are. The lack of success has meant we've never been forced to compromise.

"We've also been lucky to be able to tour with so many different bands. From AC/DC to Cheap Trick, Blue Öyster Cult and Robert Plant. We even did a tour with Billy Squier when 'Out Of The Silent Planet' came out. Years later Billy told me he'd specifically asked for us to be on that tour. It may seem strange for someone like Billy Squier to like King's X, but it shows how appreciation for what we've done crosses all kinds of genres."

KING'S X are still active to this day and the band are currently plotting a new studio album, the first recording since 2008's 'XV'. Pinnick also has releases in the pipeline from his 'other' bands KXM (featuring Dokken guitarist George Lynch and Korn drummer Ray Luzier), Grinder Blues and Supershine, not to mention working on his own solo album.

"My trouble is that I can't turn down any offers," laughs the bassist. "So I end up spreading myself too thinly. I have to start saying no to things. But Ty, Jerry and I are talking about a new King's X album. There's no definite timetable as yet, but we hope to get into the studio before the end of the year, with a release in 2019."

Gaskill is thankful for the career he's had with King's X.

"It's been so fulfilling," he says. "Musically, it's been everything we always wanted. There are so many people who know and love the band and we seem to have so much respect from more successful musicians. That means a lot to me. If I had to choose the King's X albums to play to anyone who's never heard us before, then I'd go for 'Out Of The Silent Planet', 'Gretchen Goes To Nebraska' and 1994's 'Dogman'. These are the records that our fans seem to like the most, so who I am to argue with them?"

"I have a huge fondness for our first album," concludes Pinnick. "I have a habit of being too analytical about production and sound quality and always find fault. But there's no doubt that the songs are strong and that's what resonates with most people. They listen to 'Out Of The Silent Planet' and love it. It kick-started our career, and has given us so much."

"I'M GLAD I HAD A HEART ATTACK!"

Jerry Gaskill explains how his serious medical issues have made him a better drummer...

Photos: IconicPix/Pete Cronin

ON 25 FEBRUARY 2012, King's X drummer Jerry Gaskill suffered a heart attack.

"I'd gone to a club that was close to where I lived," he recalls. "I played a few songs with the band on the bill that night, because it featured a couple of friends of mine, and after doing the set I began to get pains in my chest. I assumed I'd just pulled a muscle and that it would soon pass. But I couldn't shift the pain and I began throwing up and holding my chest because it was getting worse. I passed out in the bathroom, but thankfully my wife was on the spot and she insisted on taking me to the hospital. That's when I was diagnosed as having had a heart attack. But I was unconscious at the time, so have no memory of what happened."

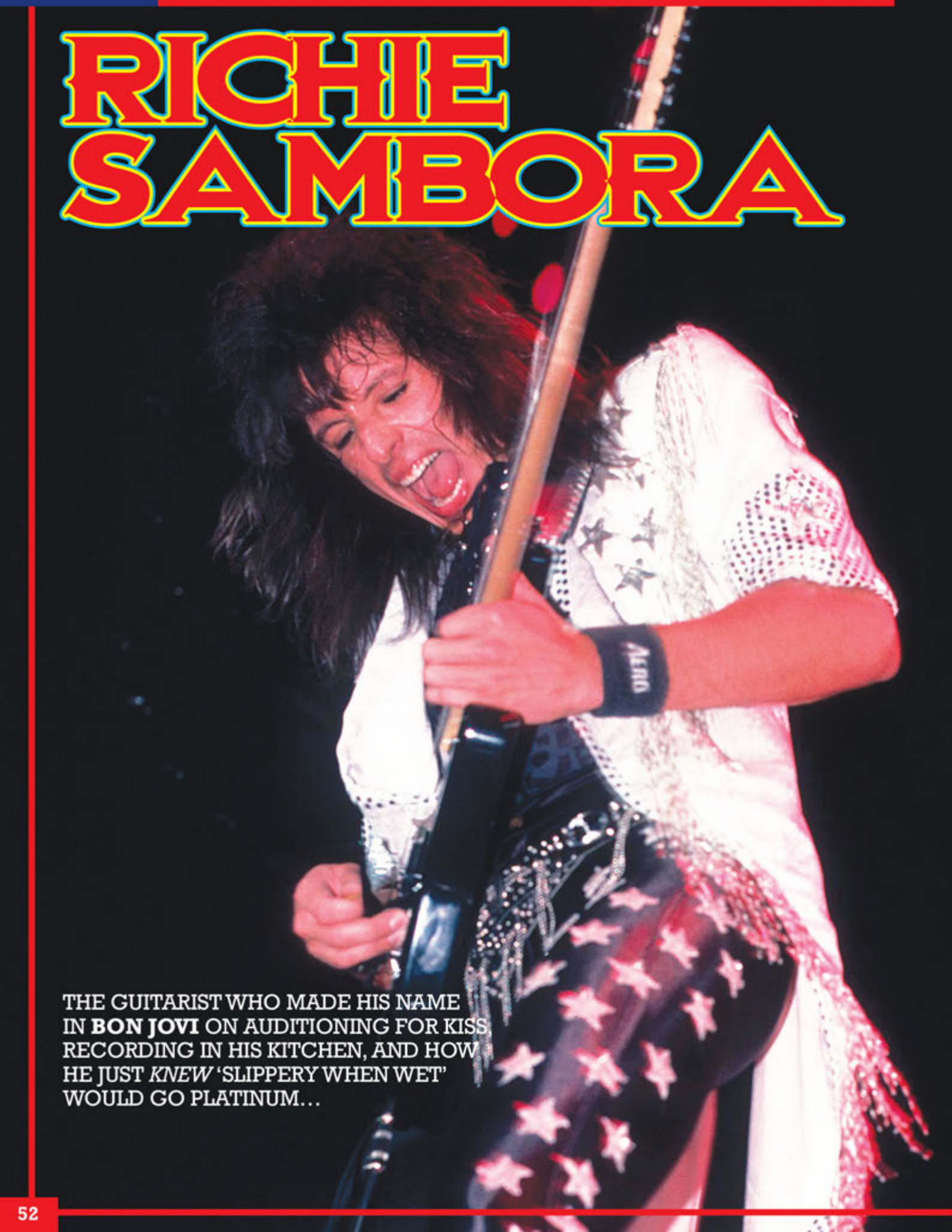
The result was that Gaskill completely rethought his diet.

"I totally altered what I ate and looked after myself a lot better. But two and a half years later [on 12 September 2014] I had another heart attack and I had to have bypass surgery. What this second episode did was change my mentality towards everything. I decided not to stick to such a strict diet as before, but rather to eat anything I wanted as long as my body told me it was OK. This has definitely worked in my favour and I have to say I've never felt stronger or healthier in my life. I work out six days a week and believe I'm a better and more powerful drummer than ever before. So in the long run these heart attacks have actually done me a lot of good! It may sound like a strange thing to say, but I'm glad I had them, because they led to me having a much healthier lifestyle, as well as becoming a better musician than before."

Jerry now has a very unusual attitude to mortality fuelled by his health issues.

"I feel I have a kinship with death," he reveals. "I have no fear at all about meeting death in the future. Death has a certain kindness about it and what it does is ease you into acceptance of what will happen. My relationship with death is now a very positive one and I believe that people should always learn from going through what I did. Everything happens for a reason."

RICHIE SAMBORA



THE GUITARIST WHO MADE HIS NAME IN **BON JOVI** ON AUDITIONING FOR KISS, RECORDING IN HIS KITCHEN, AND HOW HE JUST *KNEW* 'SLIPPERY WHEN WET' WOULD GO PLATINUM…

Let's kick off with your early career, Richie. Is it true that you had a deal with Led Zeppelin's Swan Song Records before you joined Bon Jovi?
"It is true. That was with a band called Mercy. But it was just my luck that the record company fell apart [in the wake of John Bonham's death]. I played for a while with Duke Williams And The Extremes [who had released two albums on Capricorn Records in the mid '70s]. I was playing, writing, doing tapes... just trying to be an artist. I got in there and got my hands dirty. The club scene in New Jersey was insane when I started out in the mid-'70s. There was a lot going on. I had a band at one point called Message and started an independent label, called Dream Disc, just to put our record out so *we* became the boss. Message was a cool band. It was me and Dean Fasano, who had also been the vocalist with Mercy, with Alec John Such as the bass player. We played a lot of colleges, toured with Joe Cocker..."

Apparently you auditioned to replace Ace Frehley in Kiss in 1982. Why was that?
"The fact is, when I auditioned Kiss were looking for someone who worshipped them. I liked them as a band and I saw them early on: they were cool, they always put on a great show, and they carved a very good niche for themselves. But I auditioned for them because I saw it more as an opportunity to make some serious cash and bring it back home to put into my own band. It was about trying to make it up the ladder any way you can without being a whore, y'know?"

So how did you end up getting the Bon Jovi gig?
"It wasn't an overnight decision to join Bon Jovi. I remember having some kind of communication with Alec who asked if he could go and moonlight with Jon's band. I was in California at the time and had picked up a couple of gigs, so it was no problem. But when I came back East, Alec asked me along to see the band. He told me that Tico Torres was in the group, too. He was a well-known drummer, so that was interesting. I saw the show and it was good. Jon was clearly already a star, so I joined the band. I was the missing link."

Was it obvious to you from the start that there was chemistry between you and Jon?
"Yeah, absolutely! There was mutual respect automatically because we'd both had the same experiences in trying to get shit started for ourselves individually, taking tapes to record labels and stuff like that. The record business was actually much smaller back then. There was a lot more mystique about it at the time. You often had to wait for people to come into town. However, once you got a record deal you had more of a chance of making it back then. That's all lost now, because labels are betting on a quick return. They're interested in the next three months rather than thinking about a whole career."

Bon Jovi had an out-of-the-box Top 40 hit with 'Runaway' in 1984. Was that totally unexpected?
"That song was originally put together even before Jon met me. I didn't think it was what the band would sound like, but it gave us a leg up, so that was OK."

Were you aware that when the first Bon Jovi album hit the racks in the UK on import it sold on the strength of Aldo Nova making a special guest appearance?
"Yeah, 'cos nobody knew who I was at the time [laughs]. I know what it's like to be a rock star, but I still like living on Planet Earth."

> "THE FIRST TWO BON JOVI ALBUMS WEREN'T THAT GREAT, ALTHOUGH THE FIRST RECORD WAS BETTER THAN THE SECOND. BUT WE WENT OUT AND WORKED HARD AND NEVER HAD A DAY OFF."

You toured relentlessly to promote the first two Bon Jovi albums. How tough was that?
"Not at all tough, actually. It was like, 'let's see what happens'. The first two albums ['84's 'Bon Jovi' and '85's '7800° Fahrenheit'] weren't that great, although the first record was better than the second. But we went out and worked hard and never had a day off, because when we weren't opening shows we'd play our own gigs. We were planting the seeds for the time when the band truly arrived with 'Slippery When Wet' in 1986."

Was there a lot of pressure to step up your game with the third album?
"I always took it one album at a time. When I heard 'Slippery...' I really felt it was a record that would go platinum. It sounded really good. It was classic American rock'n'roll. Van Halen had just broken up with Dave Lee Roth. There was a gap in the market. We wanted to play stadiums, and it seemed possible. We could see enough success coming in the future, because we made a big jump with that third album. In a way, 'Slippery' was like our first proper album, because we'd straightened everything out. Even the basic tracks that we recorded on the first day in the studio sounded better than anything we'd recorded previously. I'd wanted to work with Bruce Fairbairn ever since I'd heard his work with Loverboy. And I especially liked 'The Big Prize' album he did with Honeymoon Suite."

How did it feel to perform with Bon Jovi again when the band was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame this year?
"Oh, that was a lot of fun! It was easy and entertaining. It was a really nice night, and it was fabulous to be recognised for what you've done. There were no bad vibes. It was just great."

And now you're working with your partner, Orianthi. What's it like being two extremely well-known guitarists in the same household? Do you ever talk about anything else?
"Yeah, of course! We're always doing other stuff. Crazy stuff; like feeding lions and water-skiing!"

You two have recorded a new album, 'Radio Free America', as RSO (Richie Sambora & Orianthi). Can you tell us why it's so different?
"We're a new entity! It was a joy to make this album with [producer] Bob Rock, who set up a studio in our kitchen – so we'd just go downstairs every day and work! The songs kept coming as we recorded. I love so many different kinds of music – I tried to get those influences in Bon Jovi – and I think with RSO we've got something that sounds new. It's a sound that's born out of us going out on the road and working together. We grabbed the tiger by the tail hard. No one sounds like us, and Ori and I are impatient to get back out there on the road again."

Interview by Dave Reynolds. Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

KISS – THE SOLO ALBUMS

THE FANT

IN MANY WAYS IT was inevitable that the four members of Kiss would make solo albums. What wasn't inevitable was that the records would be so diverse, opening a window into a world that the band's manager, Bill Aucoin, had kept firmly shut up to that point.

It's impossible to overstate the speed of the New York band's rise to fame, nor just how much strain it would put on relations between four musicians whose personality traits were so very different. Kiss had released just six studio albums when solo efforts were first mooted in early 1978. Even more incredibly, the band's very first US platinum album, 'Destroyer', released in March of 1976, was less than two years old. At hyper-speed, Kiss had morphed from an acquired taste for theatrically inclined hard rock fans into a ubiquitous marketing phenomenon, pushing out an endless array of Kiss products stretching far beyond music to a hungry American mass-market audience. While this ability to sell a *brand* rather than a band would doubtless have had huge appeal to the business brain of bassist and vocalist Gene Simmons, other band members were far less keen on this evolution.

"We were fried and miserable from all the albums, all the touring," said drummer Peter Criss, pulling no punches in his autobiography *Makeup To Breakup*. "I just didn't want to do this anymore. We'd become a f**king Barbie doll-selling lowlife piece-of-sh*t merchandising

At the start of 1978 Kiss were by far the biggest rock group in America. But after so much time living in each other's pockets, inter-group tensions were starting to surface. The answer? Time out to do a solo album each, culminating in four Kiss-branded albums, all released on the same day. Over 14 pages Howard Johnson shines a spotlight on one of the craziest ideas ever hatched and the amazing music it produced…

ASTIC FOUR

band. We didn't even play our instruments well anymore. Everything became money, money, money."

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS between band members weren't helped by the fiasco that was the made-for-TV movie *Kiss Meets The Phantom Of The Park*, shot in May of 1978. The film was so bad that vocalist and guitarist Paul Stanley admitted "people openly laughed" when he attended a screening of the movie in Hollywood. Stanley was equally candid when he said that during the filming, "the four of us weren't speaking unless we were delivering lines." This would have sounded almighty alarm bells in the head of the band's manager Bill Aucoin. He, most of all, would have been scared that the Kiss cash cow would suddenly stop delivering.

"The solo albums were centred around giving the guys a break from each other," said Aucoin, diplomatically. "It gave them independence. There was renewed energy and excitement. Even though they were all separate, it was like a whole new Kiss again."

Alvin Ross, who at one time co-managed Kiss with Bill Aucoin, remembers things differently. "Everyone in the Kiss organisation felt it was risky," he told *Rock Candy*. "Aucoin and the management team were never very optimistic about the success of the records, and quietly saw it as the beginning of the end for the band." ►

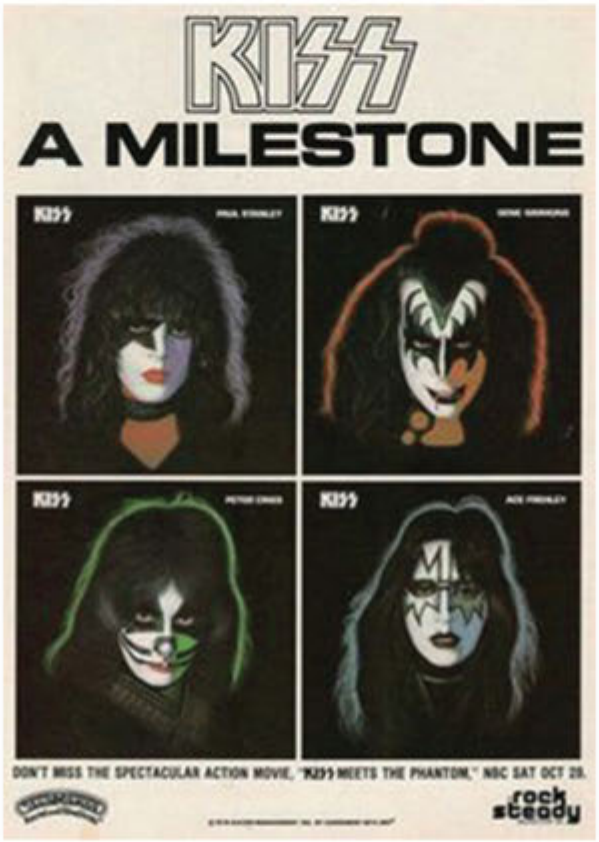
Photo: Fin Costello

KISS – THE SOLO ALBUMS

PERHAPS UNSURPRISINGLY, given the vibes within the band at the time, all four members were enthusiastic about the prospect of doing their own album. It meant they could take time out after living in each other's pockets for years. Plus the solo albums appealed to each band member's competitive instincts. Paul Stanley admits that everyone went into their individual project wishing each other "anything but good luck."

What was perhaps most interesting about the records was the way they highlighted each individual's personal musical taste, rather than simply producing a facsimile of the hard-edged-rock-with-pop-overtones that had secured Kiss such huge success. Criss immediately started working up material that unashamedly drew on the music he loved: "Motown-inspired r'n'b with horns and black back-up singers." Frehley began pulling together a Hendrix-inspired, heavy guitar album, while Simmons reached for old Beatles influences and mixed them with a surprisingly sentimental love for old Hollywood movie glamour. Only Paul Stanley's material would draw an obvious line back to Kiss's musical heritage, albeit flecked with a softer, more ballad-oriented approach.

"I think Peter was the most enthusiastic about doing a solo album, because ever since 'Beth' was a hit he saw himself as the next Frank Sinatra," says Alvin Ross. "But from an ego standpoint they were all excited about the project."



IT'S PROBABLY no coincidence that Simmons, Stanley, Frehley and Criss tried to put some physical distance between themselves as they started work on their records. Simmons primarily recorded with long-time Kiss collaborator and 'fifth member' Sean Delaney in England; Criss worked with Vini Poncia, mainly in LA; and Frehley retreated to New York and Sharon, Connecticut with Eddie Kramer. Stanley, meanwhile, worked with producer Jeff Glixman in both New York and LA.

"I had a goal in mind," relates Peter Criss in *Makeup To Breakup*. "To do the best album of the four and then leave the band with dignity."

Sean Delaney was only too aware of the potential the solo project had to cause the end of the group. "He thought there would be winners and losers and that would bring about the demise of the band," explained Criss.

In many ways, manager Bill Aucoin was caught between a rock and a hard place. If he'd insisted the band continue recording as a unit, there was a likelihood that the pressure of these four people in close proximity, and not getting along, would lead to a permanent fissure. If, however, Aucoin sanctioned the solo album project, there was the distinct possibility that a hot record for one of the members would lead to them leaving Kiss. In essence, Aucoin chose the least-worst option.

THE KISS image and brand were jealousy controlled by management, and they were generally successful in keeping all signs of inter-band tension out of the public domain. For Kiss's massive army of fans, then, the solo albums were an exciting development in the evolution of the group. This would be a unique opportunity to get a deeper insight into the musical personalities of the band members. A release date of 18 September 1978 was set for a simultaneous release of all four albums, but not everybody thought this was a smart idea. Some within the management team argued that the albums should have been drip-fed into the marketplace so that the risk of each album cannibalising the others' sales would be significantly reduced. Nonetheless, it was decided to release all four albums at the same time "to give the appearance that it was still Kiss," Alvin Ross says.

The marketing campaign for the four solo albums, each simply bearing the name of the musician and a painting of their made-up face, was ambitious. The pressure on Casablanca to deliver big numbers was enormous. Part of the hype was based around the fact that each of the albums would ship platinum, a million copies of each. And while this had obvious PR appeal, it didn't take into account the varying popularity of each band member. Then there was the music itself. Would each of the four guys produce high quality material? Alvin Ross recalls that when the music was delivered, the feeling within management was that "each album was of exceptionally high quality. To their credit, each member of the band worked their asses off to deliver a great product."

IN TYPICAL Kiss style, the solo album project was ridiculously ambitious and in many ways downright crazy. Simply getting four guys to produce music to a deadline, and for the teams behind them to create artwork, launch a cohesive marketing campaign, and get stock into the stores on time was a triumph in itself.

"We all took pride in the fact that we were able to pull off an unprecedented event," says Alvin Ross, and he's surely right. But despite the fact that all of the Kiss solo albums made the Top 50 on the US *Billboard* album charts, the weight of expectation and the level of investment in the project meant that it was almost impossible for it to be a commercial success.

Eddie Kramer, who produced Ace Frehley's album, is blunt in his appraisal of the impact the four albums had. "All three of the other guys' solo records went into the sh*tter," he said. "And Ace's was the only one that sold

because we had a great single with 'New York Groove'."

Neil Bogart, meanwhile, may have only been half-joking when he said "We got more albums back than were shipped" and Alvin Ross calls the solo project "a disastrous idea." But it's also important to look at the quality of the records the four band members produced.

IT'S GENERALLY acknowledged that Ace Frehley's is the best of the four. This probably came as a surprise, not least to Paul Stanley, who admitted he was worried about whether or not Ace would be able to make an album at all. But the success of the catchy 'New York Groove' single, written by Russ Ballard and originally recorded by UK glam rockers Hello, opened people's ears to an album that was packed with hugely endearing rockers like 'Rip It Out' and 'Speedin' Back To My Baby'.

Stanley's album was a solid affair, with a couple of rockier songs – 'Tonight You Belong To Me' and 'Wouldn't You Like To Know Me' – that were right up there with his best compositions. It sounded the most like Kiss, which maybe made it less interesting in the context of the project. But, nonetheless, it has a set of songs that's worn really well over the years.

'Gene Simmons' provided an eclectic mix, including some surprisingly sensitive moments. Songs like 'Mr. Make Believe' and 'Man Of 1000 Faces' revealed something more about a man who had previously revelled in presenting himself as cartoonish.

And what of Peter Criss's effort? Well there's no doubt that the drummer took the biggest risk, stepping way outside the traditional Kiss musical world. At the time, most Kiss fans were nonplussed by this r'n'b record with pop and big band accents. Certainly Stanley and Simmons were scathing of his efforts. "I think Peter's record summed up a lot about what was a problem, ultimately, with the band," said Stanley. Simmons was even harsher, "Out of all the records we've ever done solo or as a group, I think that one showed that the guy behind it didn't really have a clue."

With the benefit of hindsight you have to say that's harsh. If you're looking for a record with hard rock leanings you're going to be disappointed. But Criss bravely made the record he wanted to make, and songs like 'That's The Kind Of Sugar Papa Likes' and 'I'm Gonna Love You' are undeniably enjoyable bar room fodder.

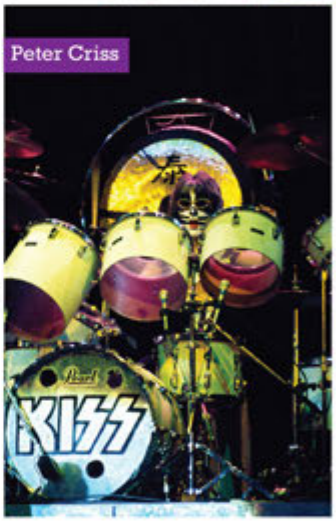
RECORD SALES and commercial impact were incredibly important for everyone involved at the time, of course. But 40 years on, what does any of that really matter in comparison to the musical legacy of each of the four Kiss solo albums? What is certainly significant, though, is that these four releases marked the beginning of the end of the original Kiss line-up.

1978 was the downfall of the band, reckons Peter Criss. "That's when that ego, that cancer, came in. I'd be surrounded by people who would say, 'You don't need those f**king jerks'."

THE KISS SOLO ALBUMS PROJECT PROVED TO BE A UNIQUE EVENT IN ROCK MUSIC HISTORY, LEAVING US WITH MUSIC THAT'S AS CURIOUS AND FASCINATING TO US TODAY AS IT WAS 40 YEARS AGO.

Paul Stanley

Gene Simmons



Peter Criss

Ace Frehley

"The success of my solo album opened my eyes and made me a little more cocky," admitted Ace Frehley later. "It made me realise I had the ability to do my own thing. That planted the seed for me that eventually I was gonna do my own thing."

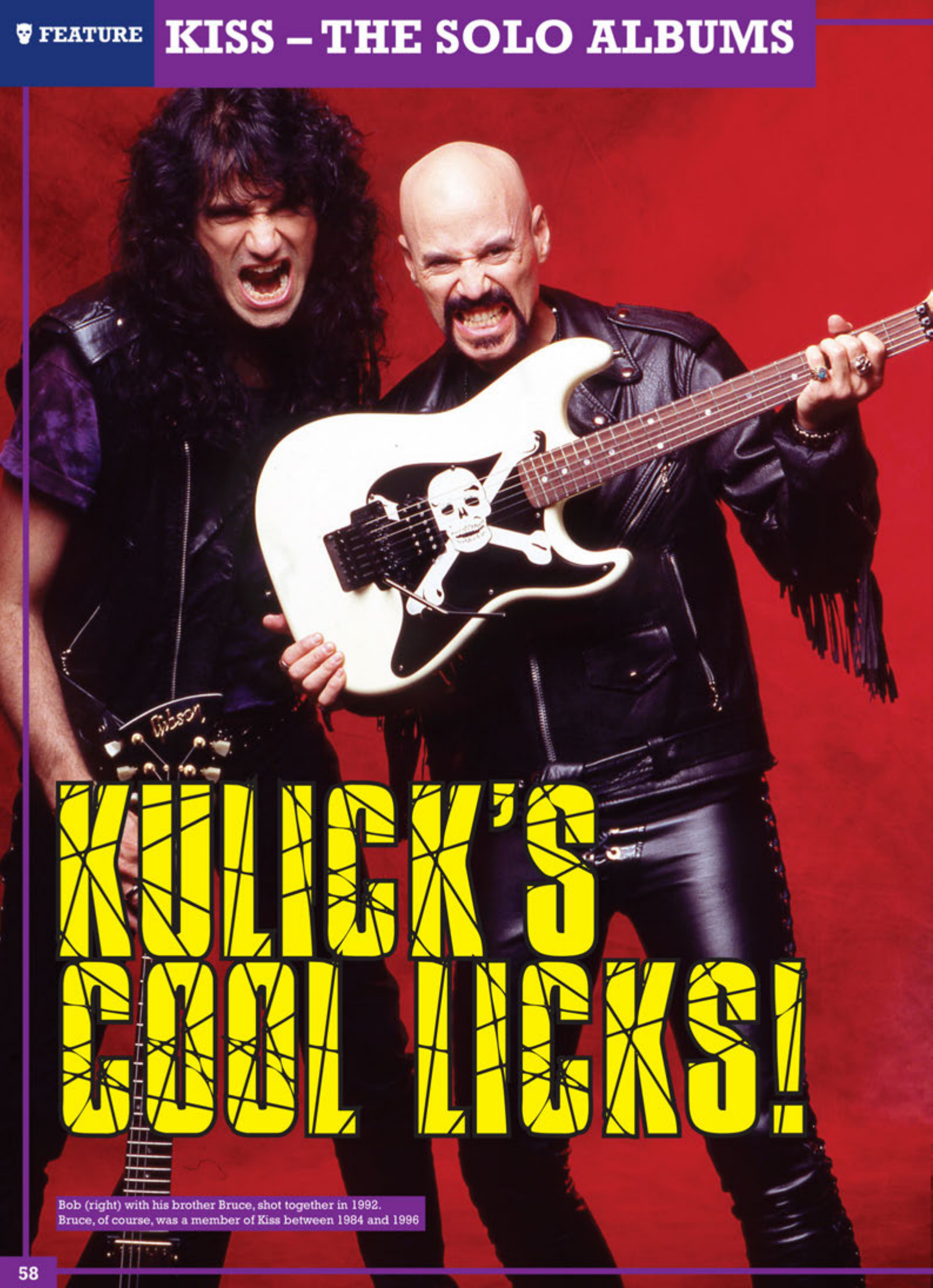
By the time Kiss reconvened to start work on the next collective band album, 1979's 'Dynasty', it quickly became apparent that the idea of giving the members time away from each other had only put a sticking plaster on a gaping wound. Arguments over which solo songs would get an airing on the next Kiss tour were just the tip of the iceberg. Given that 'Dynasty' producer Vini Poncia had worked on Peter Criss's solo album, it was ironic that Criss was sidelined for this project. Anton Fig played drums on all but one track of the album. "Peter was no longer capable of playing what was asked for and needed," said Stanley.

It was clear that Kiss was fragmenting and Criss officially left the band on 18 May 1980. By the end of 1982, Frehley had followed him out the door.

THE FOUR Kiss solo albums marked a definite watershed moment for the band, the point where individual egos could no longer be subjugated for the overall good of the band. But making those records was the only option at that point, the only way of avoiding an immediate split. There's no doubt, though, that the Kiss solo albums project proved to be a unique event in rock music history, leaving us with music that's as curious and fascinating to us today as it was 40 years ago. And for that reason alone 'Peter Criss', 'Ace Frehley', 'Gene Simmons', and 'Paul Stanley' must surely be considered an artistic success.

Additional quotes from KISS Behind the Mask: The Official Authorized Biography *by David Leaf And Ken Sharp*

Photos: Rich Galbraith



KULICK'S COOL LICKS!

Bob (right) with his brother Bruce, shot together in 1992. Bruce, of course, was a member of Kiss between 1984 and 1996

***Bob 'brother of Bruce' Kulick** has played guitar with Meat Loaf, Diana Ross and his own fantastic band Balance. But he also brought the noise to Paul Stanley's 1978 solo album. He explains how and why he became The Starchild's right hand man for the project...*

YOU ALMOST JOINED KISS RIGHT AT THE VERY START OF THE BAND, BOB. HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?

"Back in 1973 I'd been playing with Long John Baldry and had just finished a tour supporting Uriah Heep, but I was looking to join a band. I answered an ad in [New York's alternative newspaper] *The Village Voice* that said a 'Zeppelin-style band' was looking for a guitarist. I can't remember if the name was still Wicked Lester then, but they certainly had no record deal at this point.

"Anyway, I set up an audition and went to the band's loft in downtown Manhattan. Of course I had no idea what I was going to get, so I walked into this dark room and saw a bunch of guys with long hair. All I hoped was that the amp sounded good when I plugged in! The thing is, an audition's not like a gig where you know what you're going to do, or like a session where you're just waiting for people to tell you the when, where and how. I had *no* idea what to expect. But we talked for a few minutes and then we jammed. They showed me some pieces of music that were part of songs they'd been working on, though I don't remember what they were. And then this other guy came in and put his guitar down – and that was Ace. Gene had some words with him, but to be honest I wasn't paying much attention. I was concentrating on my gig."

WHAT WAS THE MAKE-UP SITUATION AT THIS POINT?

"Well, they showed me a prototype photo or mock-up of some ideas they had for the make-up and costumes. At that time David Bowie was wearing make-up and his band the Spiders From Mars had costumes. So I said, 'Well OK, that's interesting. But you referenced Zeppelin... If we were as good as Zeppelin, then we wouldn't need to do any of that, right?'"

A BAD MOVE?

"Well, not really. They said, 'Well yeah, but this is what we're into. Are you OK with that?' Of course if I'd known then what I know now I would've been more, 'I *love* this. When do we start?' But that's where we left it. We had a good time playing together. I liked them and they liked me. But Paul called a couple of weeks later and said, 'You played great, but we thought the chemistry was better with the guy who played just after you.' We exchanged numbers and said we'd keep in touch, which we did.

"I went to see some of Kiss's early shows at a club called the Coventry in Queens, and Gene, Paul and I would hang out together, go get something to eat together and go to shows together. We were starting to get friendly. I didn't see much of Ace and Peter, but that wasn't a reflection of anything. It's not like I wouldn't have hung around with Ace just because he had the guitar gig in the band. It was just that he was living outside the city, and we all lived in Manhattan."

FOUR YEARS LATER, THOUGH, YOU FINALLY GOT TO PLAY WITH KISS ON A RECORD...

"They needed my help when they were putting 'Alive II' together. Paul called me up and said, 'Ace isn't being very cooperative. We'd like you to come by and put some solos down for some studio songs we're doing for the next record. Can you help us out?' The understanding was always that there would be no credit, but I knew this kind of thing happened. Think about 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps'. There's an incredible solo on that record, but nowhere does it say it's Eric Clapton. We all thought it was George Harrison. And Kiss were my friends, so I wanted to help out for two reasons. First, it would be a great experience for me and would strengthen the bond between them and me. Second, we'd be able to hear what playing together actually sounded like."

THEY MUST HAVE LIKED WHAT YOU DID, BECAUSE SOON AFTERWARDS, IN 1978, YOU WERE INVITED TO PLAY ON PAUL'S SOLO ALBUM...

"That's right. Paul called me and said, 'We're all gonna do a solo record and I'd like you to play on mine.' Then Gene called me and said, 'We're all gonna do a solo record and I'd like you to play on mine.' Now it made no sense for them to have the same guy playing on two of the solo records, but Paul just beat Gene to the punch."

HOW DID THE PROJECT GET UP AND RUNNING?

"Paul asked me if I knew a bass player, which I did, and that's how we ended up with Steve Buslowe, who's a great guy and a serious musician. Paul liked him a lot. He wasn't just a 'play the root notes' kind of guy. Then we got Richie Fontana on drums and we were away.

"We basically built it all up from scratch in the studio. We set up at Electric Lady in New York and worked the tunes up together like a band. Paul ran through the concept, how he wanted to do it. He'd come in and say, 'here are the chords' and we were like, 'OK great.' Simple. Paul's a pro. He knew what he was doing."

HOW DID IT DIFFER FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE OF RECORDING WITH KISS?

"It was so much fun, particularly for Paul, I think, because there was no pressure of, 'Oh, you've got to sound like Kiss'. On Paul's record I didn't have to worry about trying to be Ace. On 'Alive II' there was a bit of, 'Well Ace wouldn't play that'. So some of my guitar-playing vocabulary was negated by the fact that I'd had to ►

Photo: IconicPix/William Hames

KISS – THE SOLO ALBUMS

keep it to a Jimmy Page-ish/Ace Frehley-ish vibe. But then when it came to Paul's stuff... There are Bob's jazzy licks on 'Ain't Quite Right', for example. And there were plenty of other things I was able to do.

"I had more fun being me, of course, and it was great to play with Paul. By this time he was a huge success and a big star. After being around him for a while I said, 'Do you know what? He *deserves* to be a star, because he has the talent of a star.' Watching Paul dish it out... wow! You know? I've been on stage with some big names, like Diana Ross and Meat Loaf. But Paul Stanley? I don't know if anyone could beat him in his heyday as a performer, as a frontman, and as a singer."

DO YOU THINK PAUL WAS HAPPY TO BE WORKING OUTSIDE KISS AT THAT TIME?

"Yeah, I think so. I think all the guys needed a break from being shoved on top of each other all the time. It's difficult at the best of times, but when you add all the pressure of being such a huge band like Kiss, with all that money to fight over... That's tough. It was an interesting set-up. You had two very abnormal guys in Paul and Gene, two guys who weren't stoned off their faces all the time. And then you had two guys who were much more like what everybody else in bands was like. Everyone thinks Ace and Peter were the oddballs. Well no, that was Paul and Gene! To their credit they were able to keep the train on the tracks."

WAS THERE A SENSE FROM PAUL OF YOU BEING IN COMPETITION WITH THE OTHER GUYS' ALBUMS?

"I'm sure there was some of that, especially between Gene and Paul. Nobody thought Ace was going to produce the big album, but then he had a big hit with 'New York Groove'. But I didn't hear anything else that the others were recording at the time. Nobody was going to anyone else's studio to hear what they were up to."

DID YOU FEEL WHAT YOU WERE RECORDING WITH PAUL WAS TOP-NOTCH STUFF?

"I was very proud of Paul as writer. His understanding of song structure and hooks was fantastic. It was like, 'Look at what you got here!' I knew the songs were really good and that we as a group could only make them better – and that's what we did. I loved the variety. On the one hand, 'Wouldn't You Like To Know Me' was a very poppy song, and then 'Take Me Away (Together As One)' was a much heavier thing."

WAS IT EVER ON THE CARDS FOR YOU TO GET A LOOK-IN, WRITING WISE?

"There was never talk of me co-writing. It was more like, 'Is this a good solo spot for you?' So I got a chance to shine on something like 'Tonight You Belong To Me'. That was pretty much a one-take powerhouse solo and Paul loved it. 'Move On' and 'Ain't Quite Right' both had really long solo sections, too, so I really got to play. It was great to be able to stretch out and really be me, and stuff that would never have flown on a Kiss record really fit on Paul's solo album."

> "BY THIS TIME PAUL WAS A HUGE SUCCESS AND A BIG STAR. AFTER BEING AROUND HIM FOR A WHILE I SAID, 'DO YOU KNOW WHAT? HE *DESERVES* TO BE A STAR, BECAUSE HE HAS THE TALENT OF A STAR.' WATCHING PAUL DISH IT OUT... WOW!"

HOW IMPORTANT WAS JEFF GLIXMAN AS PRODUCER?

"Well as I said, it was really Paul's thing. He was in charge, but I think the record company needed to feel that there was someone in control besides the artist. Glixman was good organisationally, so that was a positive."

YOU RECORDED BOTH IN NEW YORK AND LA. ANY RECOLLECTION AS TO WHY?

"Not really. Paul just told me we were going to go to LA to do some stuff and I was fine with that. I think I preferred the New York sessions to the LA sessions. I liked the vibe better."

HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THE FINISHED RECORD WHEN IT FINALLY CAME OUT?

"I was very happy with it, because I loved the songs and I loved what I played on that record. Plus nobody went off and changed a bunch of things that I'd recorded. What you hear is what it was. We had some fun doing it and Paul and I became closer, which was a bonus. Overall, recording that album was a great experience and a great time in my life."

COULD YOU EVER HAVE IMAGINED THAT YOU'D STILL BE TALKING ABOUT THOSE DAYS 40 YEARS LATER?

"It wasn't something any of us ever thought about. Forty years felt so far away back then that it was nothing to be concerned about. But now that we're here I can really appreciate those experiences – much more than when I was young. All those wonderful experiences I've gained in my life have kept me feeling like a kid. I still don't feel like an adult. I have adult responsibilities, sure, but I get up and I play guitar like a kid. That's a beautiful thing to have in my life.

"I played with Paul on one of those rock cruises not all that long ago and, honestly, the vibe was no different to what it was back in 1978. It's still an honour and a privilege to play with Paul Stanley."

Photo: Rich Galbraith

Dennis worked on all the Kiss album covers from 1975 to 1987

"EVERYBODY LOVED THE COVERS!"

ART DIRECTOR DENNIS WOLOCH ON HOW THOSE FOUR ICONIC SLEEVES CAME TOGETHER...

SO HOW DID YOU FIRST START TO WORK WITH KISS, DENNIS?

"I worked at an ad agency and the boss, Howard Marks, was friends with Bill Aucoin. Bill started out doing TV commercials and the two of them eventually went into business together to provide a one-stop shop for clients. When Bill and Sean Delaney discovered Kiss, Howard was happy, because he saw dollar signs from all the ad work he was going to get."

THE FIRST ALBUM YOU DID WITH KISS WAS THE 'ALIVE!' ALBUM IN 1975, RIGHT?

"Yes. I had nothing to do with the first three Kiss albums; the record company did them. At that time Kiss really needed a hit and 'Alive!' gave them one. Not that I can take the credit for that, of course, but from that moment on I was their 'go to' art director."

HOW DID THE CONCEPT FOR THE SOLO ALBUMS COME TOGETHER?

"Everyone trusted me by that point, so I had a blank sheet of paper. The first thing that bounced around inside my head was to have each band member in full costume, maybe with some fantasy thing around them. I was thinking of building a huge set and photographing the crap out of it. But I nixed that idea when it occurred to me that the four covers really needed to feel timeless. If we'd had full costumes on the covers they'd be tied to one period, because the costumes changed. So I decided on portraits..."

BUT YOU COULD STILL HAVE DONE THE PORTRAITS AS PHOTOGRAPHS RATHER THAN PAINTINGS...

"Sure, I believe that one of the most important decisions I made was that there wouldn't be photographs. No matter how beautiful a photographic shot is, it's always capturing a moment in time. So I said, 'You know what? It's going to be a painted portrait and I'm going to keep it really, really simple – just a face and a black background and minimal design.' That's when I decided just to do a little skeleton of the Kiss logo and simple outline typeface for the names to match the feeling of the logo. I didn't want any weight up at the top distracting from the portrait."

HOW DID YOU FIND THE ARTIST FOR THE PROJECT, ERALDO CARUGATI?

"We noticed his work in a regular annual of illustrators. I think I saw something he did for *Playboy*, a face that was a bit fantasy grotesque. I wasn't knocked out, but I saw *something* there. [By this time Eraldo had also painted the remarkable owl illustration on the cover of Rush's 1975 album 'Fly By Night'.] Eraldo was based in Chicago, so we spoke on the phone and he sent me some sketches that convinced me to give him the job.

"When he was almost done I flew to Chicago and he showed me his work. The portraits were just magnificent and I was *so* happy, but I knew they weren't quite done. The necks stopped a little abruptly; they looked decapitated to me. So I got Eraldo to fade the necks more and that helped a lot. Now of course the heads had to be backlit, because there was black hair on a black background. They were going to do a yellowish glow, but I wanted to individualise the images a little further. That's when I got the idea to use different colours for each, which I'd done on some Kiss pendants a while before."

THERE'S A STORY THAT THE DROP OF BLOOD FROM GENE'S LIP WAS A LAST-MINUTE ADDITION. TRUE?

"That's true. Eraldo delivered the final job to me in New York in person. He unveiled the four portraits that were about 18 inches square and I thought they were just beautiful. But we decided Gene needed something more. We didn't want to make his face full of blood. That would have been horrible and out of context. But one little drop leaking out seemed right. Eraldo went into his pocket and pulled out a brush. Then out of his briefcase he grabbed a piece of cardboard with dried lumps of paint on it. It was his personal palette. He added a little water to the red and went right to work on the actual artwork without so much as a pencil sketch. I couldn't believe he was doing it and couldn't even look! But when he was done he'd rendered the drop of blood absolutely beautifully. All I could say was 'Bravo!'"

AND HOW DID EVERYONE REACT TO THE FINISHED ALBUM ARTWORKS?

"There wasn't one bad word! Not one. For once, *everybody* loved them."

KISS – THE SOLO ALBUMS

Big John Harte (right) keeps a watchful eye on Kiss as they take a stroll in New York City, 24 June 1976

"THEY WERE COMPETITIVE"

*Not only was **Big John Harte** Kiss's security guy, he was also their on-the-road confidante. Here he offers a unique insight into the mindsets of the band members during the solo album period...*

YOU'RE A WELL-KNOWN FACE IN KISSTORY, JOHN. HOW DID YOU FIRST HOOK UP WITH THE BAND?

"I was first hired by Kiss back in 1975. I'd worked security with a guy called Rick Stuart at an outdoor venue called Roosevelt Stadium in Jersey City a couple of years earlier. Then Rick got hired by Kiss and a short time later they decided they needed another security guy. Rick put me forward and so I interviewed for the job in a hotel room after a show Kiss played at the Capitol Theater in Passaic, New Jersey..."

YOU WERE INTERVIEWED BY THE BAND?

"Primarily with all four of the band, but also with the road manager, JR Smalling. I'd already worked at some shows that Kiss had played, and although they weren't my cup of tea musically, that didn't put me off. Gene did most of the talking – he's such a wallflower, as you know – and they felt me out to see where my head was at. They definitely didn't want to hire someone who was a fan. They wanted to hire someone to do a job. I'd met JR previously as well, so he and Rick knew about me and sold me to the band a little bit. At the end of our conversation they seemed to be favourable, but didn't make me a job offer. They said they'd be in touch. Then I got a call from the band's management asking me to come in to meet Bill Aucoin. So I met with Bill, which was more formal, and I ended up getting the job."

BY THE TIME THE 1978 SOLO ALBUM PROJECT CAME AROUND, THE BAND HAD CHANGED FROM BEING A LOW- TO MIDDLE-RANKING ROCK CURIOSITY TO THE BIGGEST BAND IN AMERICA. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE A LEARNING CURVE FOR YOU...

"It really was. When I first started working with Kiss the job definitely wasn't about keeping people away from the guys. There was some curiosity, but we were more or less travelling companions for them. That meant I got to know them well. Gene was the schoolteacher, the big professor telling you how he wanted things to be done. Paul was much quieter and more mysterious. He clearly had a dark, artistic side. Ace was the electric guy. He liked guitar gadgets and played with all that stuff in his

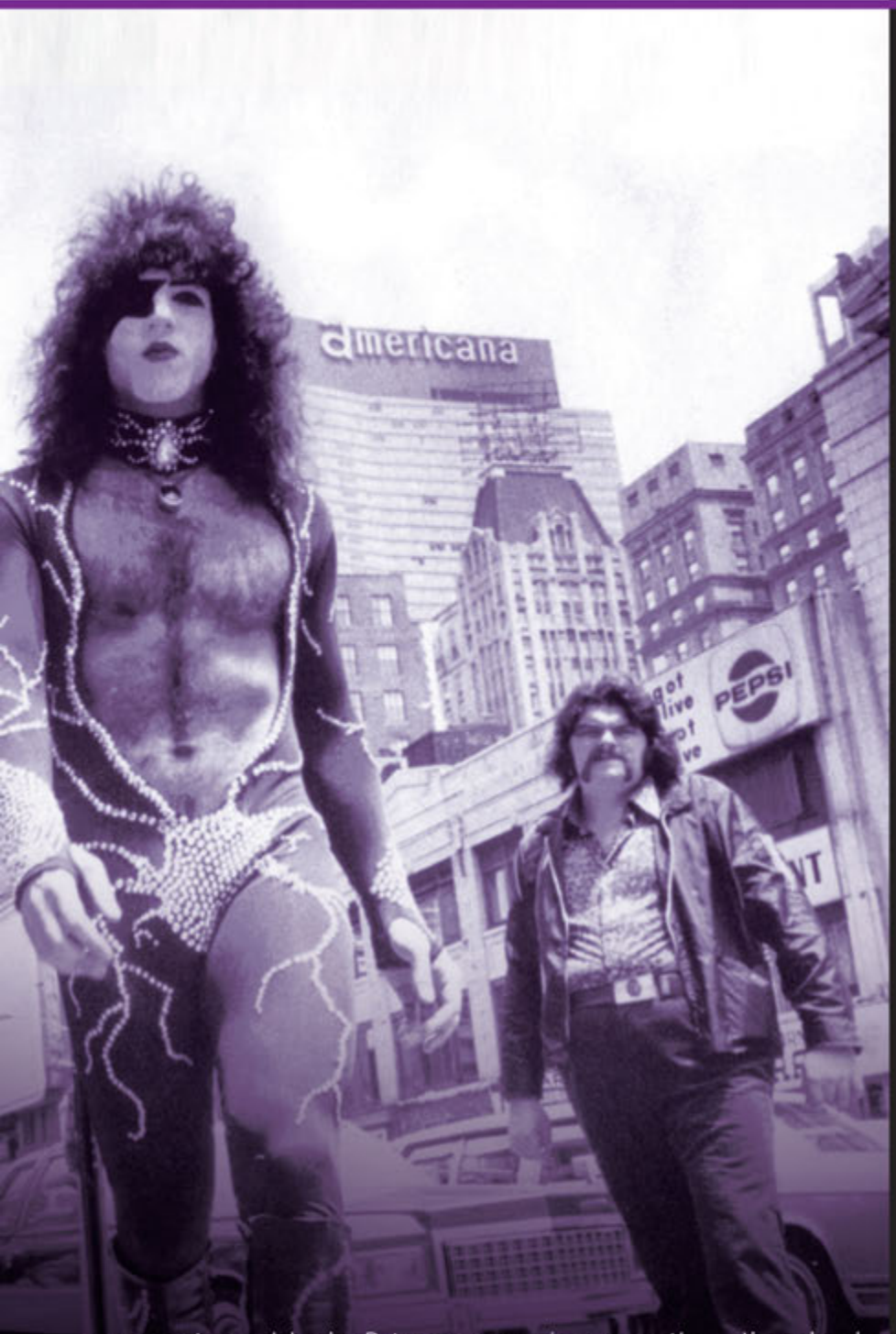


Photo: Getty Images/Richard Corkery/NY Daily News

room or at soundchecks. Peter was gregarious, more the wild child. Mind you, they all liked to prank each other, because it took away the monotony of life on the road."

DID YOU HAVE A HARD TIME KEEPING THEIR IDENTITIES HIDDEN FROM THE PRESS AND OTHER PEOPLE WITH CAMERAS?

"As they got better known, the make-up became the defining thing, and around the end of '76 we realised people were trying to photograph them without their make-up. That meant we had to look at things differently. We had discussions with Aucoin about how to move the guys around and be as unobtrusive as possible."

WHEN DID YOU FIRST HEAR TALK OF SOLO ALBUMS?

"While the band were filming the *Kiss Meets The Phantom Of The Park* movie, around May of '78, there was talk of the guys doing a solo project. Everyone thought it would be a good idea, because if you stay with what's selling today, then it may not sell tomorrow. It gets boring for the listener and it gets boring for the musician, because there's no progression. So as far as I understood it, the idea was that the solo albums were going to take the guys on their own individual musical journeys. It became a topic of conversation for them at dinner. 'What are you going to do? Where are you going to do it? What producer are you going to use?' That kind of thing. I was privy to those conversations because I was eating with them.

"Once everything was agreed I remember that there was a big meeting to make sure everybody in the organisation was on the same page. We were told that the band were going to record individual albums in different places, and that they had to be done by a certain date because they were all going to be released on the same day. But beyond that we weren't privy to the detail. All we knew was that there was a deadline that had to be met."

DID YOU GET THE FEELING THAT ALL FOUR GUYS WERE EQUALLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE PROJECT?

"I felt everybody liked the idea, for sure, because I think they all wanted to explore things outside of the Kiss environment. For example, Peter had always been a great admirer of the old jazz sounds and the big bands, so I'm sure he had the idea in his head to experiment with that. Paul was really into being a balladeer, so I'll bet he wanted to get some of that side of him out there."

DID ANY OF THE GUYS SEE THE SOLO ALBUMS AS A CHANCE TO JUST ESCAPE THE OTHERS FOR A WHILE?

"I think by that time they all wanted space from one another, because they'd worked so closely together. It was a way to take a breather, but to keep the momentum going at the same time. It allowed the guys to experiment, to shake the cobwebs out, to get away from each other, and to look at things differently. Because as much as they all liked to clown around and have fun, a band situation builds tension as well. People get on each other's nerves. When one person in a touring entourage has a bad day, it affects everyone else.

"But I don't think the solo albums came out of an, 'I don't want to talk to him' thing. It was more, 'I want to do what's in my head.' They were competitive, but when you've got four egos that's always going to happen. I'm pretty sure they all wanted to see if they had the chops they thought they had. They'd rib each other beforehand a little bit, but once everybody got in the studio there was no big communication. They were all pretty much engrossed in what they were doing."

WHAT WERE YOUR DUTIES DURING THE TIME THE GUYS WERE RECORDING THEIR ALBUMS, THEN?

"Well by that time the band had four security people, so everyone paired up with the person they got along with best. I chose Ace, mainly because he was going ►

KISS – THE SOLO ALBUMS

to be doing his record in the New York area. I lived in New Jersey, so that way I could be close to home. So I left the filming of the movie to go get married, then went straight into the studio with Ace. In the end he recorded in New York, but also at a place called Sharon in Connecticut, about 100 miles out of town."

HOW WAS IT WORKING CLOSELY WITH JUST ACE?

"I liked working with Ace. He was very up for the project and he had some great ideas. Wherever he was recording I was there, taking care of whatever needed to be done. When you're recording you can't get out to the corner store every five minutes, so I'd go get two days' supply of water and soft drinks and have them near, bring in fresh food and ice, stuff like that. When we were working in New York, if Ace wanted to clear his head and take a walk around the block, then I'd go with him. That was part of his routine, actually, to get out of the studio and wander around Radio City Music Hall and the Rockefeller Center."

> "I THINK EVERYONE'S EXPECTATIONS WERE DIFFERENT. GENE WAS THE MOST MANIACAL ABOUT SELLING MORE THAN THE OTHERS. PAUL WAS A LITTLE THAT WAY TOO. PETER AND ACE WERE A BIT MORE 'NATURE WILL TAKE ITS COURSE.'"

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN TRICKY. ACE WAS A BIG STAR BY THEN...

"Not as tricky as you'd think. When you're in a city like New York there are enough famous people wandering the streets that you don't stand out as being special. The odd person might come up and say hello, but for the most part people went about their business and that made it easy. The only people we had to worry about were the guys looking for pictures without make-up."

ARE THERE ANY MOMENTS FROM THE RECORDING OF ACE'S ALBUM THAT PARTICULARLY STAND OUT?

"I certainly remember Ace putting 'Fractured Mirror' together. We recorded the bell you hear at the start of that instrumental at a place in Sharon called Filston House. Eddie Kramer was producing and he had his assistant up on the roof of the building to co-ordinate. We used hand signals and walkie-talkies to fix things, recorded it in a couple of takes, and then we all went back into the studio to hear what we'd got. All the birds you hear were totally natural, and we had no idea that was on the tape until we heard it back. But it all fitted perfectly. That set the tone for that particular song and from that moment on everyone was really determined to make 'Fractured Mirror' a special track."

MANY FANS THINK 'ACE FREHLEY' IS THE BEST OF THE SOLO ALBUMS. DO YOU THINK ACE HAD ANY IDEA THAT HE HAD A CLASSIC ON HIS HANDS WHILE HE WAS RECORDING?

"At the time I don't think he looked at it like that. He's more of a retrospective guy. When it was finished he listened to the result and went, 'Wow, that's really cool.'"

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE FOUR ALBUMS WHEN THEY WERE FINALLY RELEASED?

"Once the albums were pressed we got them in the office, so I took them home for a listen. I had my favourites on each album, and some I liked more than others. I could definitely see the personalities of each individual in the albums they did, so I wasn't surprised by what I heard. If I'm honest, I expected more from Gene. I thought because he was so demonstrative onstage I'd get something a little more kick-ass. Peter's was what I expected; melodic, slightly jazz and big band oriented. Paul was more of an introvert, so that was reflected in the music he produced. I was biased towards Ace, obviously, but his album genuinely was my favourite. I particularly loved 'New York Groove', a real anthem.

DID YOU EVER HEAR THE BAND MEMBERS COMMENTING ON EACH OTHER'S EFFORTS?

"Nah. Everybody was guarded about what they said. They all understood that each album was that individual's personal endeavour, so while it might not be to their liking, it was what the other guy had put out and you had to give them credit for that. I think everyone's expectations were different, too. Gene was the most maniacal about selling more than the others. Paul was a little that way too. Peter and Ace were a bit more 'nature will take its course'."

DID YOU SENSE ANY DANGER THAT DOING SOLO ALBUMS WOULD PUSH A BAND MEMBER TO WANT TO DO HIS OWN THING PERMANENTLY?

"There was always the possibility that the solo albums could have sowed the seeds of discontent. And, of course, things did get tougher for certain people after those albums. Initially I don't think the guys believed the solo releases would drive a wedge between them, but as you look back on things you see that they certainly could've planted a thought in somebody's mind.

"I think deep down inside the solo albums project probably did open up the avenue of, 'You know what? Perhaps maybe I can venture off on my own.' But the disappointing overall sales probably put everybody back in check about the reality of that. The guys weren't stupid people, so why on earth would they want to stop Kiss at that point?"

MY STORY – BIG JOHN HARTE

If you want to read more about John's amazing life in the midst of the Kiss hurricane, you can pledge for his book at ***www.pledgemusic.com/projects/bigjohnharte***

"The most common question I get asked," says John, *"is what was it like to be on tour. My book tries to answer that. I was on call 24/7 – the last to go to bed and the first to get up. But that made life both interesting and raucous."*

Photo: Getty Images/Michael Ochs Archives

"GENE GOT THE ATTENTION"

THE BAND'S PR **CAROL ROSS** ON HOW SHE PUBLICISED FOUR ALBUMS AT THE SAME TIME...

HOW DID YOU GET THE GIG DOING PR FOR KISS, CAROL?
"In the very earliest days of Kiss I had a friend, Alan Miller, who was also a friend of Bill Aucoin's. He eventually worked in promotions for the band. I was just starting out in PR myself at the time and Bill asked if I'd come to see Kiss at a seedy theatre in downtown New York. As it turned out I went to work for MCA so couldn't take Kiss on at that point, but eventually I moved to the PR company Rogers & Cowan. Immediately I called Bill and said, 'Bill, I can do it now!' I brought Kiss in as my first client."

Carol Ross gets acquainted with Gene's big tongue

BY THE TIME THE SOLO ALBUMS CAME AROUND YOU'D BEEN WORKING WITH THE BAND FOR QUITE A WHILE, YES?
"I had, indeed. The famous Kiss Day in Cadillac, Michigan on 9 October 1975 was my idea. In the early days we had trouble getting the South of America to take to the band. People down there thought they were devil worshippers or something, so things like Kiss Day proved to people that these were just normal guys playing character roles, nothing more. So by the time the solo albums came out Kiss had cracked the mainstream. That wasn't an issue, but the solo records threw up other problems. I remember being in a meeting discussing the upcoming PR campaign and I asked the question, 'What happens if one album takes off and the others don't? Will that create a situation amongst the guys?' Everybody was aware of that and everybody was nervous about it. Some people thought the solo albums were a good idea, others didn't. Plus the level of investment to do it was *huge*. In the end it was the guys themselves who convinced everybody. The fact that they were happy to do solo albums meant that any reservations others might have had were overcome."

WHAT WERE THE BIGGEST PR PROBLEMS YOU FACED WITH THE RELEASE?
"Well it definitely wasn't easy, primarily because everybody in the press kept asking for Gene, which made it difficult for the others. I didn't focus on Gene, although Paul thought I did. But Paul was very shy at that time. I gave each of them my all. But Gene could talk, he was intelligent and he knew how to handle the media. He could convert someone to Kiss in a minute. You had to pull things from Paul, Ace, and Peter. They were likeable and talented guys, but they didn't have the same finesse when it came to dealing with journalists. I'd sit with them and do mock interviews to help them develop on that front. I'd tell them what they should focus on, what they should stay away from, and how to make things interesting. Eventually they got it, but it was always Gene who came to the forefront and got the attention."

SO DID YOU HAVE TO DO A LOT OF HORSE-TRADING AND OFFER UP GENE ON THE CONDITION THAT THE MEDIA TALKED TO THE OTHER THREE GUYS TOO?
"I did a lot of that, but to be fair when it came to the solo albums the media kinda knew what the deal was. They knew that it was a give-and-take situation. They understood that they'd have to talk to all four guys to get the big story."

HOW DID THE PRESS HANDLE THE FACT THAT SOME OF THE MUSIC, ESPECIALLY PETER'S, WAS SO DIFFERENT TO KISS?
"I actually think people liked the idea that Peter's album was so different. It brought something else to the table and added some depth to the Kiss story. I don't think anyone in the team feared it would compromise the Kiss sound. People really wanted the guys to identify themselves through their music, so that was why they were able to do what they wanted, musically. The differences went down well and made for good conversation. The media had their favourites, of course, but they did pick up on Peter because of what he did. They were surprised, and that expanded Peter's reputation. I felt it worked well for him."

WERE YOU HAPPY WITH WHAT YOU ACHIEVED ON THE SOLO ALBUMS CAMPAIGN?
"I was satisfied up to a point, but the sales were not good and that was a real disappointment. But it wasn't a total surprise. It was something we'd discussed even before the release. Sometimes it can happen that way. We did everything we could, and the guys did everything they could to accommodate all media. It certainly wasn't for a lack of effort, but for whatever reason sales didn't meet up to expectations."

KISS – THE SOLO ALBUMS

"I FELT PRIVILEGED"

*Drummer **Richie Fontana** played on the 'Paul Stanley' album. We asked him what it was like to be part of the Kiss solo album project...*

IN THE LATE '70S YOU WERE PLAYING DRUMS IN PIPER WITH BILLY SQUIER. IS THAT HOW YOU FIRST CAME INTO CONTACT WITH KISS, RICHIE?

"Yes, Piper was the third band signed by Aucoin Management. Kiss were first, then Starz, then Piper. After we signed I'd sometimes see some of the Kiss guys at the office or at various company parties."

WHEN DID YOU FIRST MEET ANY OF THE BAND PROPERLY AND WHAT WERE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THEM?

"It wasn't long before Gene and Paul came to one of our rehearsals to meet us, and to see and hear what we were all about. Kiss had already become famous by then, so I was very impressed that they would do that. They spoke with us as Aucoin family members and about musical things. I guess they were interested to see who Bill Aucoin had added to the roster. They seemed very nice, two New York City guys just like me. In fact, we grew up not too far from each other."

HOW DID YOU RATE PETER CRISS AS A DRUMMER?

"I thought Peter was an excellent drummer. Even though his early inspiration came from traditional players from the jazz era like Gene Krupa, he was still a hard-hitting, solid rock drummer who helped develop those early Kiss songs. Peter had technical ability and creativity, and I thought he was the perfect drummer for Kiss."

WHAT WERE YOU DOING AT THE TIME PAUL GOT IN TOUCH ABOUT HIS SOLO ALBUM?

"Piper had just split up and I was working with Billy Squier, recording demos of his post-Piper material. The session band for those recordings consisted of Billy and me, plus bassist Bucky Ballard and guitarist Kirk Brewster, who'd both been in a Texas band called the Werewolves. During that same year I was also working with another ex-Piper bandmate, Tommy 'Gunn' Schiff. We were part of an excellent band, but it split up before anything could happen. All the while I knew that Sean Delaney had a project in store for me, but I didn't know what it was or when it would happen. Sean was putting the finishing touches to his own solo album for Casablanca Records, so I was sort of floating between projects and waiting."

SO HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED?

"I received a phone call from Bill Aucoin's assistant telling me that Paul wanted me to come down to Electric Lady Studios in New York. It was that simple. Paul already knew about my abilities as a musician from the Piper records. Both Kiss and Piper had worked at Electric Lady at the same time about a year before. They were mixing 'Love Gun' and we were working on our second album, 'Can't Wait'. Plus we'd also opened for Kiss on a bunch of shows on the 'Love Gun' tour. So there was history between me and Kiss already."

HOW DID PAUL EXPLAIN THE CONCEPT OF WHAT HE WAS TRYING TO DO AND WERE YOU ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE IDEA?

"Paul didn't need to do much explaining, because the guys he was looking to use knew what they were getting into – a Kiss solo project. We didn't know what would become of the recordings, but I was really enthusiastic and felt privileged that Paul asked me to work with him."

HOW DID IT WORK OUT THAT YOU PLAYED ON JUST FOUR TRACKS – 'TONIGHT YOU BELONG TO ME', 'MOVE ON', 'AIN'T QUITE RIGHT' AND 'WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO KNOW ME' – AND NOT THE WHOLE ALBUM?

"I'd originally heard that Carmine Appice was going to play on the whole album, but obviously the project evolved differently. Paul only presented us with four songs during the New York sessions. When we were recording them I wasn't sure if they were to be demos or keeper tracks, and obviously Paul didn't know either. I think it was his initial intention to re-record them in Los Angeles, along with the other five songs that made up the album. But once he was there he decided to use the New York versions for the album proper. Eventually he called me to say that the tracks we cut would be included on the album, and then some more overdubbing was done, backing vocals and things like that."

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE SESSIONS?

"When I walked into Studio A at Electric Lady Studios Paul was there with guitarist Bob Kulick and bassist Steve Buslowe. He started off by playing 'Tonight You Belong To Me' on guitar so that we could hear it from top to bottom. The ideas for creating the instrumental parts came quickly. We started running down the song while picking and choosing the things that worked best as the feel for the rhythm track began to take shape. We were all experienced at making records, so it didn't take long before we had an arrangement worthy of a basic track with two guitars, bass and drums, all played live. There were no prior rehearsals to prepare the songs; everything was done right on the spot at Electric Lady. Once we had the parts locked in, Paul told the guys in the control room to start recording and we began doing takes. Little did I know that we'd recorded the groundwork for what would become the opening track on the album. We used the same technique to create all four songs over the course of two or three days. I also remember being with Paul in the control room as he overdubbed some E-Bow guitars after we cut the basic track for 'Ain't Quite Right'."

WHICH OF THE FOUR SONGS DID YOU MOST ENJOY WORKING ON AND WHY?

"You're asking me to pick one song, but I have to go for two. I loved 'Tonight You Belong To Me' for its "epic nature," as Paul referred to it. For the most part on that song my drumming plays a supporting roll to the layers of melodic power and a great lead vocal by Paul. It's a killer track. I also think 'Ain't Quite Right' is exquisite, an amazing piece of work, from the writing to the vocals, and from the playing to the overall production."

WHAT WAS PAUL LIKE TO WORK WITH?

"It was great working with someone who knew what they were doing and who knew exactly what they wanted. Paul was able to march us through the songs while putting his trust in us, knowing we'd do the right thing and make suitable suggestions. His leadership on the sessions made for a great atmosphere."

DID YOU MEET THE OTHER SESSION DRUMMERS, CARMINE APPICE OR CRAIG KRAMPF, DURING THE RECORDING PROCESS?

"No, but I became good friends with Craig when we worked together the following year. The songs Craig played on ['It's Alright', 'Hold Me Touch Me', 'Love In Chains' and 'Goodbye'] were done in Los Angeles. I don't know where the Carmine track ['Take Me Away (Together As One)'] was created."

WERE YOU PLEASED WITH HOW THE SONGS TURNED OUT AND WITH YOUR OWN PERFORMANCES?

"I was pleased. I only wish the overall sonics could have been a bit more hefty, but other than that I was happy."

DID YOU EVER GET A SHOT AT THE KISS GIG AFTER PETER CRISS LEFT IN 1980?

"Not exactly, but there was some talk of it. I was in a band with Sean Delaney called Skatt Bros. One day I received a call from Bill Aucoin's West Coast assistant asking me to come down to the office and telling me to arrive alone. When I got there she told me that Bill had called, that he was with Gene and Paul, and that they were talking about me in regard to Kiss!

"For a moment I sat there like a deer in the headlights, then left the office to go to rehearse with Skatt Bros. at Casablanca Soundstage on Sunset Boulevard. It was weird, because both bands had the same manager, Bill Aucoin, and the same record company, Casablanca. At the time Kiss had yet to be unmasked, so they needed someone unknown. I'd already been on two albums with Piper and my face had been seen. I guess I was considered because they knew my playing, how I looked, and that I could sing. But in the end it never happened."

ARE YOU STILL IN TOUCH WITH PAUL OR ANY OF THE OTHER KISS GUYS?

"I see Ace from time to time when he's playing in New York, and I had a quick Facetime hello with Paul when I was at an Aucoin reunion dinner back in 2016."

HOW DO YOU LOOK BACK ON THE 'PAUL STANLEY' ALBUM AND YOUR EXPERIENCE OF WORKING ON IT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?

"I'm very fond of that album and often think about it when I walk by the platinum record on my wall. Other than my association with a band as big as Kiss, I'm happy to have been part of such a quality record."

Photo: Getty Images/Lynn Goldsmith

JAPANESE METAL

Back in 1984 *Kerrang!* magazine got behind the **New Wave Of Japanese Heavy Metal** big-time by sending *Howard Johnson* to Tokyo to report on a burgeoning scene that featured **Loudness** and **Earthshaker**. Now, in our own Japanese metal special, *Rock Candy* editor HoJo recalls that most memorable of trips, top Japanese rock journalist *Kaz Hirose* gives his own view of this special time, and RC boss *Derek Oliver* explores the roots of the Japanese rock scene with a fascinating personal overview...

SONIC SAMURAI

HEAVY METAL WAS IN a good place back in 1984. US stadium rockers Van Halen were at the height of their powers and their appropriately titled '1984' album would sell over 10 million copies. German rock export Scorpions released their ninth studio effort, 'Love At First Sting', and eclipsed everything they'd previously recorded with sales in excess of three million. The LA scene had coughed up some exciting new blood, as hair metal acts like Mötley Crüe and RATT made their record companies very happy with multi-platinum album successes. Metallica's 'Ride The Lightning' and Anthrax's 'Fistful Of Metal', meanwhile, were in the process of redefining what could be described as metal, stretching the genre's boundaries and bending it into new shapes.

The UK's *Kerrang!* magazine, meanwhile, was universally recognised as the world's authority on metal. And the best thing about it as far as I was concerned was that I was writing for it – at the age of just 19. It was a really exciting time, but probably nothing excited me more than the opportunity I was given to write the cover story for the *Kerrang!* issue dated 19 April-2 May 1984. It was an investigation of the emerging Japanese heavy metal scene for a piece that ended up with the title 'Sonic Samurai'.

WHY HAD I picked up on Japanese metal? I can't say for sure. The UK's hottest indie metal label at that time, Music For Nations, certainly had something to do with it. Launched in 1983 by Martin Hooker, the label had quickly built a mutually beneficial working relationship with *Kerrang!* They had also signed Metallica to a European deal, which meant they had not only made money, but they had also established some artistic credibility.

When I got word that MFN had licensed albums from two Japanese acts, Earthshaker and Loudness, I was really curious to see how Japan was interpreting a style of music that, as far as most of us knew, the country had previously only imported, not exported.

From what I was told, Loudness were the big noise of the two. Formed in 1981 by drummer Munetaka Higuchi and guitarist Akira Takasaki, the band's first album, 'The Birthday Eve', had been released in '81 on the Japanese arm of the Columbia label, and Takasaki's prototype shred work had caused a stir in his home country. The band were just about to release their fourth album, 'Disillusion', and Music For Nations had picked it up for the UK. Keen to get the might of *Kerrang!* behind the album, once they realised they'd had a bit of a bite from one of the mag's writers – me – the possibility of a trip to Tokyo to meet both bands began to come together.

> STANDING THREE OR FOUR FEET AWAY FROM AKIRA TAKASAKI'S MARSHALL STACK WASN'T FOR THE FAINT-HEARTED. BUT I WAS NEVERTHELESS SUPER-IMPRESSED BY THE YOUNG GUY'S CONSUMMATE SHREDDING CAPABILITIES.

BOTH LOUDNESS'S 'Disillusion' and Earthshaker's second album 'Fugitive', were worthy additions to the metal canon. But with the benefit of hindsight it's obvious that neither of these records would make much impact in the anglo-centric world of rock. Most of the song titles were in English. 'Dream Fantasy' and 'Milky Way' from Loudness, for example, or 'Drive Me Crazy' from Earthshaker. But Loudness vocalist Minoru Niihara and Earthshaker singer Marcy both sang in Japanese, and most Western fans, spoiled by years of endless British and American rock releases, would find that a step too far. Flushed with excitement about opening up

a new front in the metal wars, however, I wasn't at all concerned by that as I headed for Tokyo.

IMPLAUSIBLE AS it now sounds, the very night I arrived in the Japanese capital I found myself ensconced in a tiny rehearsal room "deep in the bowels of the Nippon/Columbia complex in Tokyo, from where Loudness are preparing to launch their assault on Europe." I was quick to report that standing three or four feet away from Akira Takasaki's Marshall stack wasn't for the faint-hearted. But I was nevertheless super-impressed by the young guy's consummate shredding capabilities. The band, completed by drummer Higuchi, bassist Masayoshi Yamashita and diminutive vocalist Niihara, played metal every bit as fearsome as any of their English-speaking counterparts.

I was impressed by Loudness's technical ability, songwriting prowess and all-round enthusiasm, and quickly bonded with Minoru Niihara, who took it upon himself to become my personal guide to Tokyo's rock nightlife. First – and last – port of call on my first night in Tokyo was the infamous Tsubaki House heavy metal disco, "lodged discreetly on the fifth floor of what appears to be a regular office block." My visit was definitely something of a cultural eye-opener. For a start, the place was predominantly populated by women. This, to a young man used to the defiantly male world of UK metal, was quite an eye opener. In my original *Kerrang!* report I couldn't help but remark that most of the girls were "stunningly beautiful, all of 'em sporting ridiculously short mini-skirts." Even more amazing to me at the time, though, was the sight of a Japanese Graham Bonnet lookalike in all his white-suited, James Dean haircut glory. The fact that he was "feted like a star" by everybody who was present in the club after performing a lip-synch to Rainbow's 'All Night Long' made me even more incredulous.

Loudness. L-R: Akira Takasaki (guitar), Munetaka Higuchi (drums), Minoru Niihara (vocals), Masayoshi Yamashita (bass)

The Tsubaki House is a memory that will stay with me forever. As will the recollection of wobbling through the streets of Tokyo at four in the morning, Loudness vocalist Minoru in a worse state than me, our bellies full to overflowing with sake.

IT WAS VERY APPARENT that cultural differences between East and West were considerable at the time. I quickly learned as much when I attended a live Earthshaker gig at the Shibuya Kokaido, "a plush 3000 seater where The Runaways recorded their 'Live In Japan' extravaganza." The biggest surprise was that gigs started ridiculously early in Japan, around 6.30 in the evening. This gave the event a very different feel to a British show, where pre-loading in the pub was part of a ritual designed to make the places rowdy at showtime. The Japanese audiences could best be described as 'polite', quiet and respectful all the way through a number. They then offered up a large amount of cheering for a few seconds as each song came to an end, followed by silence again. It was odd, more like learned behaviour than a genuine emotional response to what was happening in front of them.

None of this seemed to bother Earthshaker, though. I thought they were terrific live, especially lead singer Marcy, who'd clearly modelled himself on Steven Tyler, but who had a voice and a stage presence that had its own unique appeal. Earthshaker's audience was predominantly female, but that didn't stop me thoroughly enjoying the band's melodic hard rock. "The band's second album, 'Fugitive', recorded at the Automatt in San Francisco, is due for release in April on Music For Nations," I wrote. "It really is a stormer."

The band's performance that night of songs such as 'More', 'Young Girls' and 'Fugitive' itself had me up on my feet and as Earthshaker finally left the stage I felt delighted and privileged to have been the only Westerner watching the band going through their paces.

JUST TO prove that my critical faculties hadn't been entirely warped by jet-lag and payola, though, I was more than prepared to put the boot into the show's opening act, Action.

"Someone at Philips has put an awful lot of money ►

Photos: Mark Weiss

JAPANESE METAL

into this four-piece pastiche, made up of guys with the unlikely monikers of Yoshiro, Mock, Kelichi and Hitoshi, and obviously has hopes of turning them into a bastardisation of Kiss," I said. "The poor boys can't play too well, but the young lassies loved every stereotyped pout'n'pose. All I saw was a very amateur glam rock band that made Wrathchild look like God's gift." Ouch.

DESPITE MY reservations about Action's music, I was intrigued by the rock'n'roll style that Japan had adopted. The country had always been skilled in taking other people's ideas and improving on them. And Japan's fashion industry had been especially quick to pick up on possibilities available to upgrade rock apparel. "Tokyo can lay claim to having the most chic rock'n'roll clothes shops in the world," I wrote. "Every band makes full use of such boutiques as Black and Metal Kids to dupe us into believing they're the biggest thing to hit the market in years." Very cool.

THANKS TO the rock journalist Naomi Ohno, whom I dubbed "Tokyo's Queen Of Heavy Metal," I was able to scratch the soft white underbelly of the country's rock scene. While I was in Tokyo, Naomi introduced me to the delights or otherwise of a huge number of wannabe Japanese rock bands. Groups such as 44Magnum, Urge Police, Kaizer, Jelly Roll and all-girl band Eager have been consigned to the dustbin of musical history, at least here in the West. But it was fascinating to see this whole subculture taking shape over there in Tokyo.

My main observation about how Japan was processing its rock back in 1984 was that there was too much aping of Western behaviour and that Japan would do well to focus on its own culture to create something more innovative.

"Tokyo has taken plenty from Western culture," I wrote. "And yet the feeling pervades, especially with the country's youth, that they are groping and grasping for yet more. 'Western' thus automatically signifies 'superior'."

DID THIS have anything to do with the fact that during my interview with Loudness, the band told me that they'd decided to record an English-language version of their forthcoming 'Disillusion' album? Well, of course it made sense to do that if the band were to have any hope of making commercial headway outside of their home country. And to a certain extent the ploy worked. Loudness's next release, 1985's 'Thunder In The East', was the band's first 'all English' release and remained on the US *Billboard* album charts for an impressive 23 weeks. All the same, I couldn't help but feel disappointed that what made the Japanese scene exciting to me – the foreign language, the weird vocals, the unusual fan responses to the bands' live performances, the whole exoticism of difference – would soon be extinguished by the globalisation of rock. You couldn't blame the bands, though. Who wouldn't want the chance to export their music to bigger, more lucrative markets, in the most consumer-friendly way that was possible?

I THOUGHT EARTHSHAKER WERE TERRIFIC LIVE, ESPECIALLY LEAD SINGER MARCY, WHO'D CLEARLY MODELLED HIMSELF ON STEVEN TYLER, BUT WHO HAD A VOICE AND A STAGE PRESENCE THAT HAD ITS OWN UNIQUE APPEAL.

RISING SONS
HoJo rounds-up the most-and-least-promising of Japan's new Heavy Metal acts . .
Earthshaker as they appeared in HoJo's Kerrang! special report in 1984: L-R: Yoshihiro Kudo (drums), Masafumi 'Marcy' Nishida (vocals), Takayuki Kai (bass), Sinichiro 'Shara' Ishihara (guitar)

"We want to be recognised as an international act," Loudness guitarist Akira Takasaki told me forcefully. "Despite the fact that we could easily stay here and make a very comfortable living in Japan, no problem."

"The logistics of the Japanese music industry are such that there really is only a major circuit of maybe ten venues," explained vocalist Minoru Niihara, giving me a unique insight into his world. "You can't tour for eight months, or even one month. So the answer is to record an album every six months, rather than every 18 months. At our level of popularity we can shift 60,000 to 80,000 units of every album and with so few touring overheads it's possible to make a tidy sum at the end of the day." As I said at the time, "branching out is brave move for Loudness."

GIVEN THAT Loudness are still active today – though original drummer Munetaka Higuchi sadly died of liver cancer at the age of 49 in 2008 – it would be fascinating to meet up with them again and get their views on how things panned out in their quest to break out of the Japanese bubble since I was with them in Tokyo back in 1984, and how the Japanese metal scene mutated over the years. For obvious reasons, the '80s Japanese rock scene will always hold a special place in my heart. And that's why I'm off to listen to 'Disillusion' right now... and I'm going to play it loud!

"JAPANESE BANDS TRIED TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN STYLE"

Kaz Hirose (left) is editor in chief of *Burrn!* magazine, Japan's most respected rock publication. We asked him for an insider's view of the Japanese metal scene in the mid-'80s...

ANTHEM
'BOUND TO BREAK'
"A great album."

FLATBACKER
'ACCIDENT'
"It's a killer."

LOUDNESS
'THUNDER IN THE EAST'
"A really big album in Japan."

WHAT WAS THE STATE OF THE METAL SCENE IN JAPAN BACK IN 1984?
"There's no doubt that heavy metal was on a real upward curve in Japan at that time. The whole LA metal thing had happened and that had a knock-on effect here. Loads of Japanese girls really went for bands like Mötley Crüe and RATT, and that kind of inspired a new generation of Japanese metal bands."

WAS METAL STILL PRETTY MUCH UNDERGROUND AT THAT TIME OR HAD IT GONE MAINSTREAM?
"I don't think it was underground in 1984, no. The music had already started to get really popular by then."

WHAT WERE THE BIG METAL SHOWS AT THE TIME?
"There was a radio show called *Rock Today* that was presented by Masa Ito. Masa was, and still is, a legend of the Japanese metal scene. He did so much to promote the music over here. He also presented a TV show called *Music Tomato* that was really important, as was *Pure Rock*, a TV show that started in '87. Oh, and we had MTV, of course. I call Masa the Japanese Metal God – and *Rock Today* is still going today, though it's now called *Power Rock Today*."

WHAT WERE THE BEST CLUBS FOR ROCK IN JAPAN AT THE TIME, AND WHY?
"We didn't really have rock clubs in the same way that you had them in the UK or US. But Meguro Rock-May-Kan was a very famous live venue where tons of Japanese metal bands played. It was a bit like the Troubadour and the Whisky A Go Go in LA, a breeding ground for talent. But it wasn't really a club as such, more a live space for bands to perform."

WAS IT A BIG DEAL THAT *KERRANG!* DEDICATED A COVER STORY TO THE JAPANESE METAL SCENE?
"I'm not sure how much impact that would have had here in Japan, to be honest. Japanese metal bands were always an acquired taste – even over here! I know it sounds strange, but in the Japanese music business the domestic scene and the international scene have traditionally been totally different."

> "LOADS OF JAPANESE GIRLS REALLY WENT FOR BANDS LIKE MÖTLEY CRÜE AND RATT, AND THAT KIND OF INSPIRED A NEW GENERATION OF JAPANESE METAL BANDS"

WHAT IN YOUR OPINION WAS THE BEST JAPANESE BAND OF THAT CLASSIC ERA?
"That's easy. Flatbacker. They were a special band, very exciting with super-aggressive songs. And vocalist Masaki Yamada is a fantastic singer. The band eventually mutated into EZO [whose 1987 major debut was produced by Gene Simmons]."

DID JAPANESE METAL BANDS TRY TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN STYLE OR DID THEY APE WESTERN ACTS?
"I really think they tried to develop their own style, but I guess whether that was successful depends on the ears of the individual listener."

WHAT HAPPENED TO LOUDNESS, BOW WOW AND EARTHSHAKER, THE THREE BEST-KNOWN JAPANESE METAL BANDS FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW?
"None of those three bands ever became huge outside of Japan, but they all had pretty decent careers here. Loudness are having some success again, in fact. Their latest album, 'Rise To Glory', was released this year and their [domestic] label, Ward Records, did a great job of pushing it here [it's available on earMusic elsewhere in the world]. Earthshaker are still going, but nothing much is happening with Bow Wow."

IF YOU HAD TO PICK THREE ALBUMS THAT BEST SUM UP JAPANESE METAL FROM THE EARLY- TO MID-'80S WHAT WOULD THEY BE AND WHY?
"That's a difficult question for me to answer, because my favourite band is Anthem, but they'd only released their first two albums by that time and they weren't that great. But if you'll let me pick something by Anthem that came out a little later, you should check out 1987's 'Bound To Break'. That's a great album! Flatbacker's first album, 'Accident', was released in 1985 and it's a killer too. And Loudness released 'Thunder In The East' in 1985, which was a really big record here."

EASTERN PROMISE

RC BOSS *DEREK OLIVER* DELVES INTO HIS INCREDIBLE RECORD COLLECTION TO INTRODUCE YOU TO THE FASCINATING HEAVY ROOTS OF THE JAPANESE METAL SCENE...

IT'S QUITE AN ALIEN thought these days that at one time the Internet didn't even exist. There was once very little communication between countries about music, and not much information made it through normal channels. In the early '70s there was an expanding rock scene in Japan, mostly oblivious to what we in the West were experiencing at home. It was a movement locked into geographical isolation, but informed by occasional visits from well-known bands. Free, Led Zeppelin, UFO, Scorpions and Deep Purple were first on the scene, followed by many more as the 1970s progressed. But it was clear even back then that the Japanese market was wide open and ready to embrace the hard rock scene.

Young Japanese fans were keen to emulate their new-found musical influences and set about crafting music that was, in a way, paying homage to the acts we all knew well. However, because Japan was so physically removed from the US and Europe, their acts developed styles and sounds that gave them a unique timbre, infusing heavy progressive rock with inherited Japanese culture. In addition, the vocal and lyrical content was unique; with Japanese vocalists wrestling with lyrics in English. But far from sounding odd, the vocals actually came across as positive and proud, helping to set the early Japanese rock bands apart as something very special indeed. These pioneers were laying the foundations for a future hard rock and metal scene that, as Howard Johnson points out in his feature on the 1984 Japanese music scene, produced some incredibly contemporary and accomplished acts.

THE OTHER key component in the development of Japanese rock was the level of musicianship achieved. It would appear that Japanese musicians locked themselves away in their bedrooms and didn't reappear until they were technically equal, or even superior, to any leading Western player. The sparse examples of Japanese albums that had made their way here via import left those who heard these records utterly dumbfounded by the standard of musicianship. It would appear that Ritchie Blackmore had totally captured the imagination of would-be Japanese guitar gods to the point where the average level of playing was off the scale.

OF COURSE, thanks to the wonders of YouTube, these days it's possible to hear and see a number of these pioneering bands. But even up until a few years ago, the music that these acts crafted was mostly buried deep in rock folklore, with only a few lucky souls fortunate enough to have heard the groups. The first time I heard Flied Egg (no sniggering at the back!) it nearly stopped me in my tracks. They were heavy alright, peeling off rock solid riffs, backed by a rhythm section clearly influenced by Led Zeppelin and

Cactus. The songs were fully formed and powerful to the point that if you didn't know they were from Japan it would have been impossible to tell. If you've ever heard Beck, Bogart and Appice's 1973 double live album that was recorded specifically for the Japanese market, then you would have a shrewd idea of how magical Flied Egg's 1972 'Good Bye' album sounds. It really is a flawless example of early '70s proto hard rock.

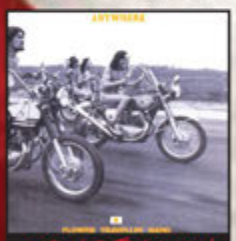
IN THE EARLY '70S THERE WAS AN EXPANDING ROCK SCENE IN JAPAN, MOSTLY OBLIVIOUS TO WHAT WE IN THE WEST WERE EXPERIENCING AT HOME.

ALSO LURKING in the shadows at this point in time were Flower Travellin' Band, another bunch of longhaired contenders with their eyes firmly fixed on the heavy blues rock crown. The band were favourably compared to Cream, and the vocalist sounds like he's channelling Jack Bruce while honking on a mean mouth harp. Their 'Anywhere' album from 1970 is a blistering example of Eastern 'isolated' heavy rock, and it's housed in an amazing sleeve with all four members riding motorcycles naked! Among their greatest tracks is a cover of Sabbath's 'Black Sabbath'; lean, mean, evil and – please hear me out on this – even *better* in some ways than the original. You should also check out their 'Satori' album from the following year. It's a concept LP, but don't let that put you off as the record delivers on all fronts, including great David Byron-style vocal yelps and menacing arrangements. Like most Japanese recordings of this era, the guitar playing is jaw dropping, but not in a widdly or indulgent way, more like a flamethrower razing the studio to the ground.

CHECK OUT Strawberry Path's 1971 effort, 'When The Raven Has Come To The Earth' for a crushing combination of a heavy Deep Purple and Cream style hard rock, with copious use of wild phasing and great Hammond organ. There's even a tip of the hat to Procol Harum at one point. The vocals are also very strong and distinctive, sounding at times not unlike a husky Ian Gillan. Again, the musicianship is top-shelf, brilliantly executed, and full marks for the title of their song 'Maximum Speed Of Muji Bird (45 Seconds Of Schizophrenic Sabbath)'. Other obscure, heavy but palatable albums include Speed, Glue & Shinki's 'Eve' (1971) and Too Much's eponymous effort from the same year. Particularly effective is the pounding crunch of Blues Creation's eponymous 1969 album.

STRAWBERRY PATH

"A crushing combination of a heavy Deep Purple and Cream style hard rock"



FLOWER TRAVELLIN' BAND

"Long-haired contenders with their eyes firmly fixed on the heavy blues rock crown"

BLUES CREATION

"Pounding crunch"

MURASAKI

"Recorded a version of Purple's 'Lazy'"

FLIED EGG

"A flawless example of early '70s proto hard rock"

BOW WOW

"Made a concerted effort to play in the UK"

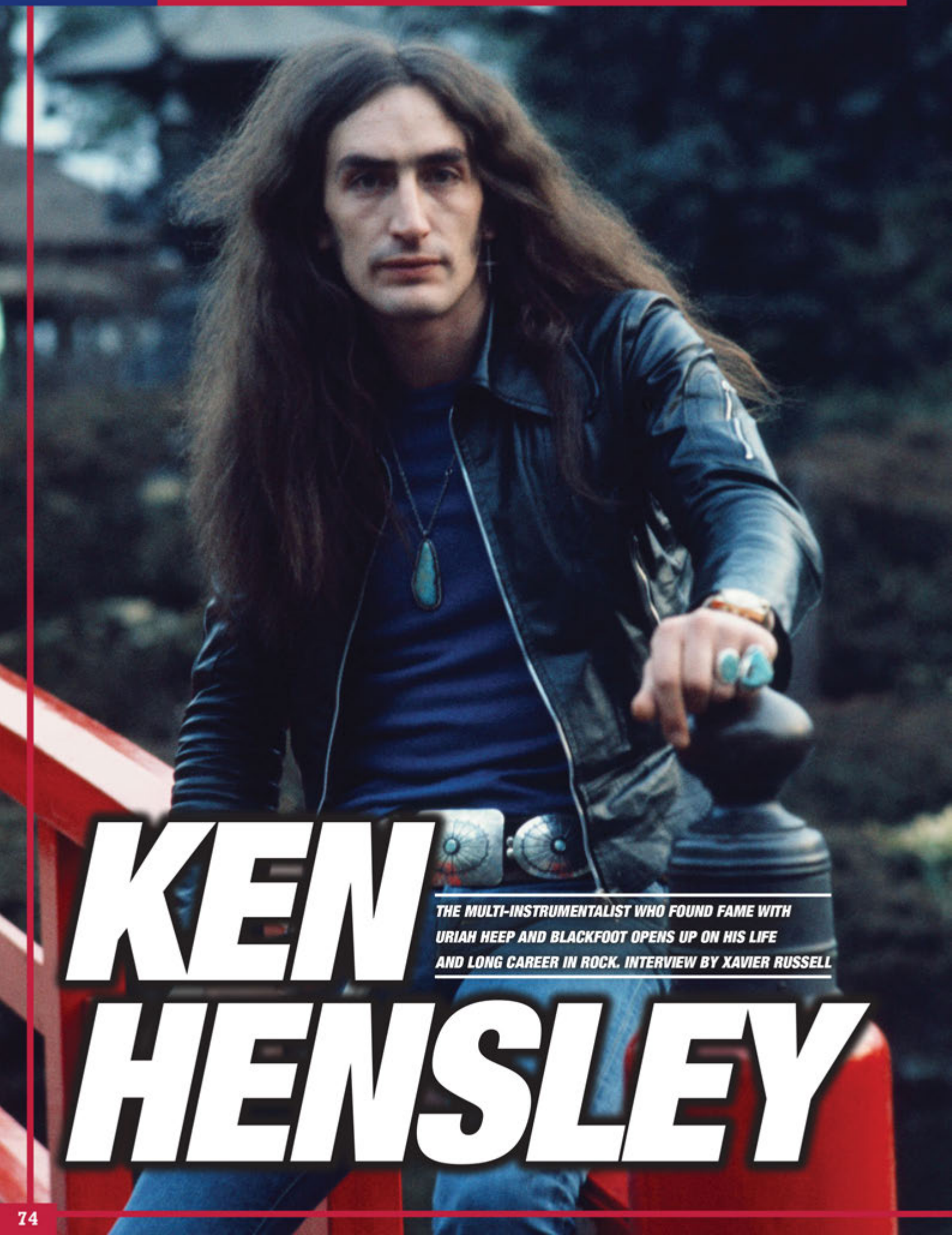
SPEED, GLUE & SHINKI

"Obscure, heavy but palatable"

LAZY

"A hard rock boy band that turned into Loudness"

COME THE mid- to late-'70s, Japanese rock had started to be influenced by the likes of Judas Priest and the Scorpions. However, the shadow of Deep Purple was never far away, in particular for Murasaki, who actually recorded a version of Purple's 'Lazy' on their eponymous debut album from 1975. In addition, they often performed 'Burn' and 'Highway Star' in concert. And give a thought to Lazy, a band named after the Purple track itself, who drifted between their label/manager's desire for a sort of hard rock boy band, and their own quest for heavy rock immortality. When they couldn't stand fighting the powers that be any more, the band simply split up and formed the ultra-exciting Loudness. There were others, of course, but they were also shrouded in mystery at the time, as no early Japanese rock band had their albums released internationally or played in any other part of the world. It wasn't until Bow Wow eventually made a concerted effort to play in the UK that most Western rock fans had any idea that all this was happening in Japan. Thank God, then, for these musically pioneering early bands, and for both Bow Wow and Loudness for blazing a trail Westwards. We salute you all.



KEN HENSLEY

THE MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST WHO FOUND FAME WITH URIAH HEEP AND BLACKFOOT OPENS UP ON HIS LIFE AND LONG CAREER IN ROCK. INTERVIEW BY XAVIER RUSSELL

WORKING WITH MICK TAYLOR AND GREG LAKE

"Mick and Greg both played in my first serious band, The Gods, but were never in the group at the same time. Mick was in one of the first versions, and Greg joined quite a bit later. The Gods was a stepping-stone for a lot of musicians who went to lots of different places, and some of them really went upwards – Mick to the Stones and Greg to ELP, of course! But playing in The Gods always felt like being in an experimental band to me. I knew it wasn't going to be my final destiny."

CRASHING WITH MEMBERS OF FREE

"I have very fond memories of slumming with my girlfriend Chip at Paul Kossoff and Simon Kirke's place around the end of 1969 or the beginning of 1970. If memory serves me right, the flat was on the Portobello Road in London's Notting Hill Gate area. We would jam quite a bit at the time, and then in 1971 both Paul and Simon worked with me at the [Radio] Luxembourg Studios in London's West End, where we recorded a bunch of demos. Some of those recordings surfaced later on my 1994 solo album of previously unreleased material, 'From Time To Time'."

Ken in the bunker at his home studio in the UK, 1977

"MUSICALLY I'D SAY HEEP PEAKED IN 1972, AROUND THE TIME OF 'DEMONS AND WIZARDS'. THAT WAS WHEN THE GROUP WAS AT ITS STRONGEST, BECAUSE WE WEREN'T AFFECTED BY OUTSIDE INFLUENCES AND WERE TOTALLY FOCUSED. AND IT WAS BEFORE THE DRUGS!"

JOINING URIAH HEEP

"I first became aware of Uriah Heep in 1969 when they were still called Spice. The band's bassist Paul Newton, who'd been with me in The Gods, introduced me to Mick Box and the boys. I joined in February of 1970 and because I brought the Hammond organ in and we started using vibrato harmonies, [Spice manager] Gerry Bron felt the difference in the band's sound warranted a name change. It happened to be the 100th anniversary of Charles Dickens's death that year. Gerry had been watching a film version of [Dickens novel] *David Copperfield* and I guess the name of the character Uriah Heep stuck in his head. To be honest, when the name was suggested none of us really cared either way, because we were in the early stages of making music together and were just happy to be doing what we were doing."

SUCCESS

"Musically I'd say Heep peaked in 1972, around the time of 'Demons And Wizards'. That was when the group was at its strongest, because we weren't affected by outside influences and were totally focused. And it was before the drugs! In terms of popularity, things started to wane after 'The Magician's Birthday' album later that same year. We'd had some success, but started to lose focus after that album. The music became less of a priority, which is stupid, but that's what happened. Things became very 'bits and pieces' and it was a very uncomfortable time for the next two or three years."

GARY THAIN

"Gary was a great bass player who joined Heep in 1972, but as soon as he started working with us on 'The Magician's Birthday' we realised he had a bad heroin habit. As things went on, it ended up being four people doing the work of five. Gary became less and less reliable and we had no choice but to replace him. So we fired Gary in February of 1975 and brought in John Wetton, who was a great player, but it just wasn't the same. Without Gary the chemistry of the band was destroyed and we couldn't rebuild it. He died less than a year after we parted company with him [in December of 1975]. The circumstances surrounding his death are very mysterious. There are all kinds of conspiracy theories – even one suggesting he was murdered! But apparently Gary took too much of something or other, tried to come down and drowned in the bath."

DAVID BYRON

"David was the original Heep vocalist, but eventually he started drinking himself to death and was pissing both of our careers down the toilet. Here's a good example of how. We were playing to 20,000 people at the Philadelphia Spectrum in the States in 1974. We'd sold that place out consistently on every American tour. But we made a big mistake on this particular tour by basing ourselves in New York and commuting to the shows, rather than staying in the city where we were playing. So we got to the venue really early, did our sound check and then had four hours to kill before the show. David drank a vast amount of alcohol and went onstage really drunk. He immediately stepped on the base of the mike stand and it flew up and smacked him straight in the mouth. His lip started bleeding and he spent the rest of the show having a go at the audience. Not good.

"I actually quit the band in the middle of that tour. Not the most brilliant thing I've ever done, but I'd really had enough. Gerry Bron eventually persuaded me to go back, which I did, but by then the rot had already set in. And I think the band had grown tired of me being the main dude anyway."

LEAVING HEEP

"We'd let [second Heep vocalist] John Lawton go [in August of 1979] and auditioned a couple of new guys. One of them was a very good singer, Peter Goalby [ex-Trapeze], and I felt he was right for my songs and our sound. The other was John Sloman [ex-Lone Star], a Robert Plant look-alike who sounded a bit like Stevie Wonder. For me, he clearly wasn't the right man for the job. But the other three members of the band chose him over Peter Goalby, the person I wanted. We went ►

Photos: Getty Images/Koh Hasebe/Shinko Music

RAPID FIRE RECALL

Uriah Heep circa 1975. L-R: Gary Thain (bass), David Byron (vocals), Mick Box (guitar), Lee Kerslake (drums), Ken Hensley (keyboards and guitar)

into the studio with Sloman to record what would be my final album with Heep, 'Conquest', and it was an absolute nightmare. We then went on a European tour in 1980 to promote the album and I distinctly remember waking up in Portugal after the last show, on 8 June 1980 saying, 'That's it. I quit!' Jump ahead a few years after I left and they'd fired John Sloman and hired Peter Goalby! You can draw your own conclusions from that."

BLACKFOOT

"Sometime in 1982 I got a call from a guy called Jay Fry, who worked for Blackfoot. I knew about the band. 'Train, Train' and 'Highway Song' were both great songs and Rickey Medlocke was a really good guitar player, had a fantastic voice and was a very charismatic guy. So I flew to Ann Arbor in Michigan, where the band was working, and started recording the 'Siogo' album with them. It was very simple for me to work on new songs, but when the guys subsequently asked me to go on tour with them I suddenly found myself having to learn songs like 'Train, Train'. I wasn't sure what to do on numbers like that, so in the end it turned out to be a bit of a mismatch. I did agree to do a second album, 'Vertical Smiles' [released in October of 1984], but never toured that record. After I found out that David Byron had died [in February of 1985] I needed to get away from music for a while."

> "WE LIVE NOT TOO FAR FROM ALICANTE IN SPAIN. WE HAVE SHEEP AND GOATS, AND MY WIFE HAS DEVELOPED A HUGE ORGANIC GARDEN."

W.A.S.P.

"A friend of mine from St Louis by the name of John Tumminello, better known as Johnny Rod, was W.A.S.P.'s bass player in the late '80s. [Frontman] Blackie Lawless asked him if he knew how to get hold of me because he wanted me to play on their upcoming album, [1989's] 'The Headless Children'. It was a strange way of recording. When I turned up at the studio I was handed a bunch of chord charts, so I rehearsed with the musicians learning the chord progressions, but not one of the songs had vocals at that point. Blackie was still writing the lyrics. The first time I actually heard the full album was at the release party in LA. I couldn't believe some of Blackie's lyrics, stuff about a 'F**king Decadent Generation'! The guy's really smart, so why did he have to write such lyrics? It was disgraceful and I actually asked to have my name taken off the album."

CINDERELLA

"Cinderella was a totally different kettle of metal to W.A.S.P. I played organ on the 'Heartbreak Station' album [in 1990] and the band had a pomp rock feel about them, but the songs were very blues-oriented. Tom Keifer was a good writer, but he didn't have the freedom to do what he wanted. He was being moulded by the record company, being told he had to go with that glam rock

Photo: Getty Images/Michael Putland

thing. So he couldn't break out and be the pop/blues singer and artist he wanted to be."

FAITH

"I became a Christian in April 1993 – as a last resort, really. A lot of things in my life were completely messed up at that time: my marriage was in the toilet, and I just couldn't seem to get a grip on anything. So I started going to this Presbyterian Church in St Louis and got chatting to the pastor, John Splinter, who also happened to be a musician. I was very honest with him and told him how I was lost and really didn't know what to do with my life. On one of my visits he suddenly said, 'I've been thinking about you a lot.' He went on to say, 'I think you need a personal relationship with God.' I just burst out laughing, wondering what on earth God would want with a twat like me? And John said, 'No, you're *exactly* the person he wants.' So we prayed together and that was the start of it. It's now grown to the point where I put all my faith and all my trust in God through Jesus. My life has really changed a lot as a result. I'm not a bible basher and it's a personal choice, but my faith has become my anchor."

LIVING IN AMERICA AND MOVING TO SPAIN

"I lived in America for 20 years and some great things happened for me there. I spent 15 years working for a musical instrument company and that was really good for me to stabilise my entire life. I still like the country, but I don't like what's happening to it right now. I missed Europe, though, and eventually moved back to England. My wife and I had a little cottage in Godmanchester in Cambridgeshire, and we lived the English rural life for a while. But she's Spanish-American and couldn't understand why it kept raining all the time. She'd forever be putting the washing out, bringing it back in, and then putting it back out again. We took a couple of trips to Spain to visit her family and we stumbled across this place where we live now. It's not too far from Alicante. We have sheep and goats, and my wife has developed a huge organic garden. We're totally isolated and surrounded by mountains. You could sit out on our terrace at night with a glass of wine and you wouldn't know where you were."

THE 'RARE AND TIMELESS' ALBUM

"The idea came up to do something that wasn't another boring anthology. 'Let's go to the vaults, see what we can dig up and find all the old outtakes.' The record label, BMG, gave me the freedom to pull things that hadn't been released from the archives, stuff people aren't familiar with, then dress them up with rare pictures of me and some hand-written notes to make the whole thing more personal. I tried to put together a synopsis of 48 years of my career that I thought people would find interesting. For example, there's a remix of the Heep classic 'Lady In Black' on there. I love it, though I know the purists won't like it. But that's alright, because all I'm trying to say is that there's more than one way to look at a song. Try it. You might actually end up liking it."

DONIN

No rock festival in the UK is held in such affection by fans and bands alike as Castle Donington Monsters Of Rock. Not only did it define the '80s metal scene, but it also created an environment where rock fans could be loud, proud, and more often than not incredibly muddy! *John Nicholson* brings you a heartfelt appreciation of why Donington was so very special...

"We parked up and walked over the hill and looked down into the bowl for the first time. There, spread out before us, were thousands and thousands of rock fans from all over the country. And the great thing was, they all looked just like us! It was such a great spirit."

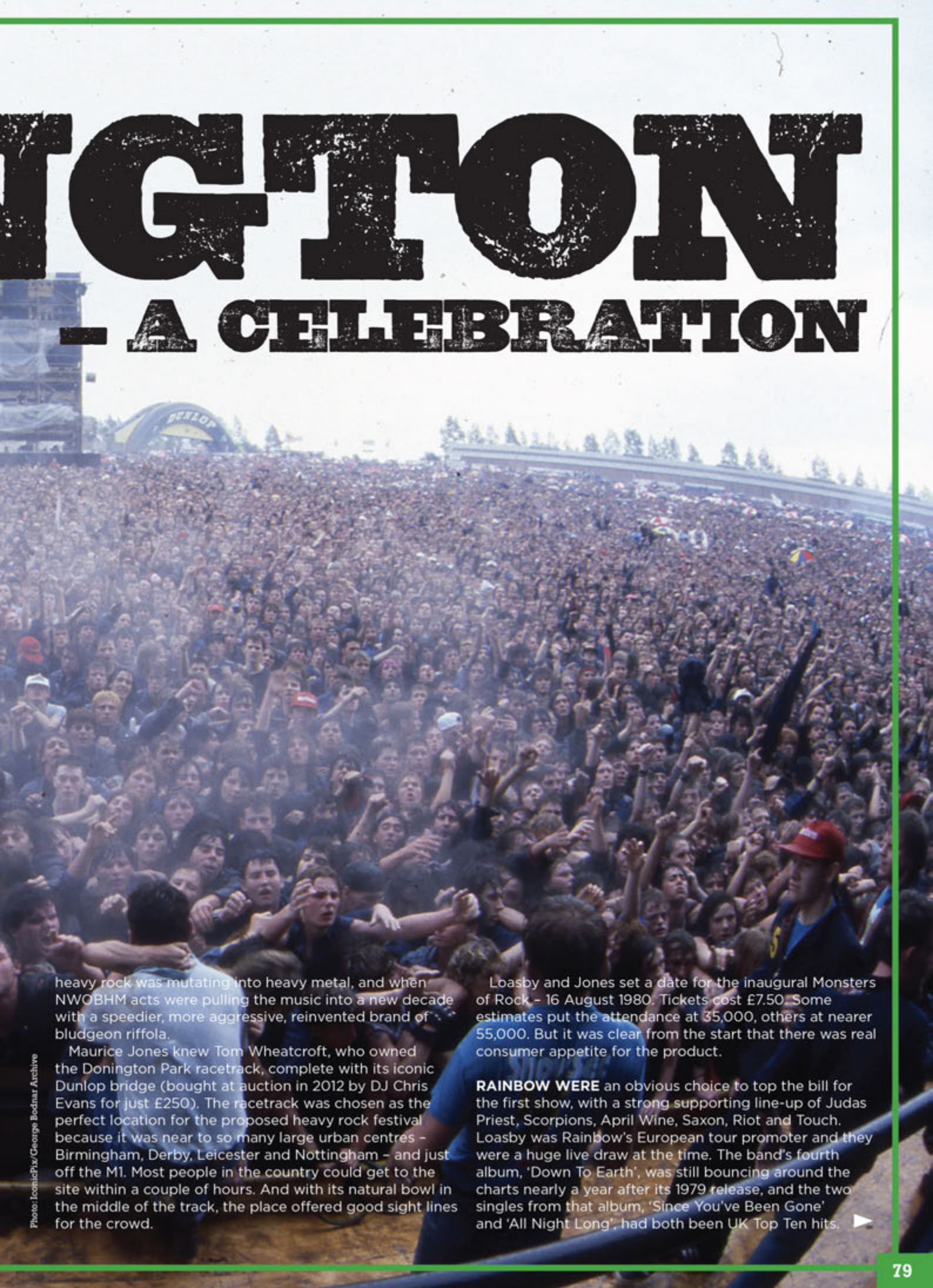
Andy Copping, Live Nation executive president of UK touring

WHEN PROMOTERS PAUL LOASBY and Maurice Jones of Midland Concert Promotions (MCP) sat down together in a pub somewhere in the East Midlands in 1979 and discussed the idea of putting on a one-day festival dedicated to rock and metal – and *nothing but* rock and metal – little could they have imagined just how legendary their festival would become and how, nearly four decades later, so many thousands of rock fans would look back on it so fondly. For many, it really was a life-changing experience.

This is the story of Monsters of Rock – or Donington, as all British rock fans know it – told by the fans and the musicians who rocked an unfashionable part of the country. This is the story of how an East Midlands racetrack became rock'n'roll holy ground.

BACK IN the late '70s there simply was no festival dedicated to rock and metal in the UK. Yes, you could go to Knebworth to see the likes of Led Zeppelin. But you'd have to sit through Chas and Dave, Fairport Convention and Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes. Fine musicians all, but definitely not heavy rock. You could also go to the Reading Festival, which was spread across three days. Reading *did* feature bands blasting out humongous riffs, but on any one day you'd be lucky if you got three acts you could truly call rock or metal. At some point there would always be a dreadful new wave band, followed by a bunch of old hippies and, more often than not, The Enid. Reading was very much a pick'n'mix selection. For those with eyes to see and ears to hear, there was surely a gap in the market at a time when

TGTON
– A CELEBRATION



heavy rock was mutating into heavy metal, and when NWOBHM acts were pulling the music into a new decade with a speedier, more aggressive, reinvented brand of bludgeon riffola.

Maurice Jones knew Tom Wheatcroft, who owned the Donington Park racetrack, complete with its iconic Dunlop bridge (bought at auction in 2012 by DJ Chris Evans for just £250). The racetrack was chosen as the perfect location for the proposed heavy rock festival because it was near to so many large urban centres – Birmingham, Derby, Leicester and Nottingham – and just off the M1. Most people in the country could get to the site within a couple of hours. And with its natural bowl in the middle of the track, the place offered good sight lines for the crowd.

Loasby and Jones set a date for the inaugural Monsters of Rock – 16 August 1980. Tickets cost £7.50. Some estimates put the attendance at 35,000, others at nearer 55,000. But it was clear from the start that there was real consumer appetite for the product.

RAINBOW WERE an obvious choice to top the bill for the first show, with a strong supporting line-up of Judas Priest, Scorpions, April Wine, Saxon, Riot and Touch. Loasby was Rainbow's European tour promoter and they were a huge live draw at the time. The band's fourth album, 'Down To Earth', was still bouncing around the charts nearly a year after its 1979 release, and the two singles from that album, 'Since You've Been Gone' and 'All Night Long', had both been UK Top Ten hits. ►

Photo: IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive

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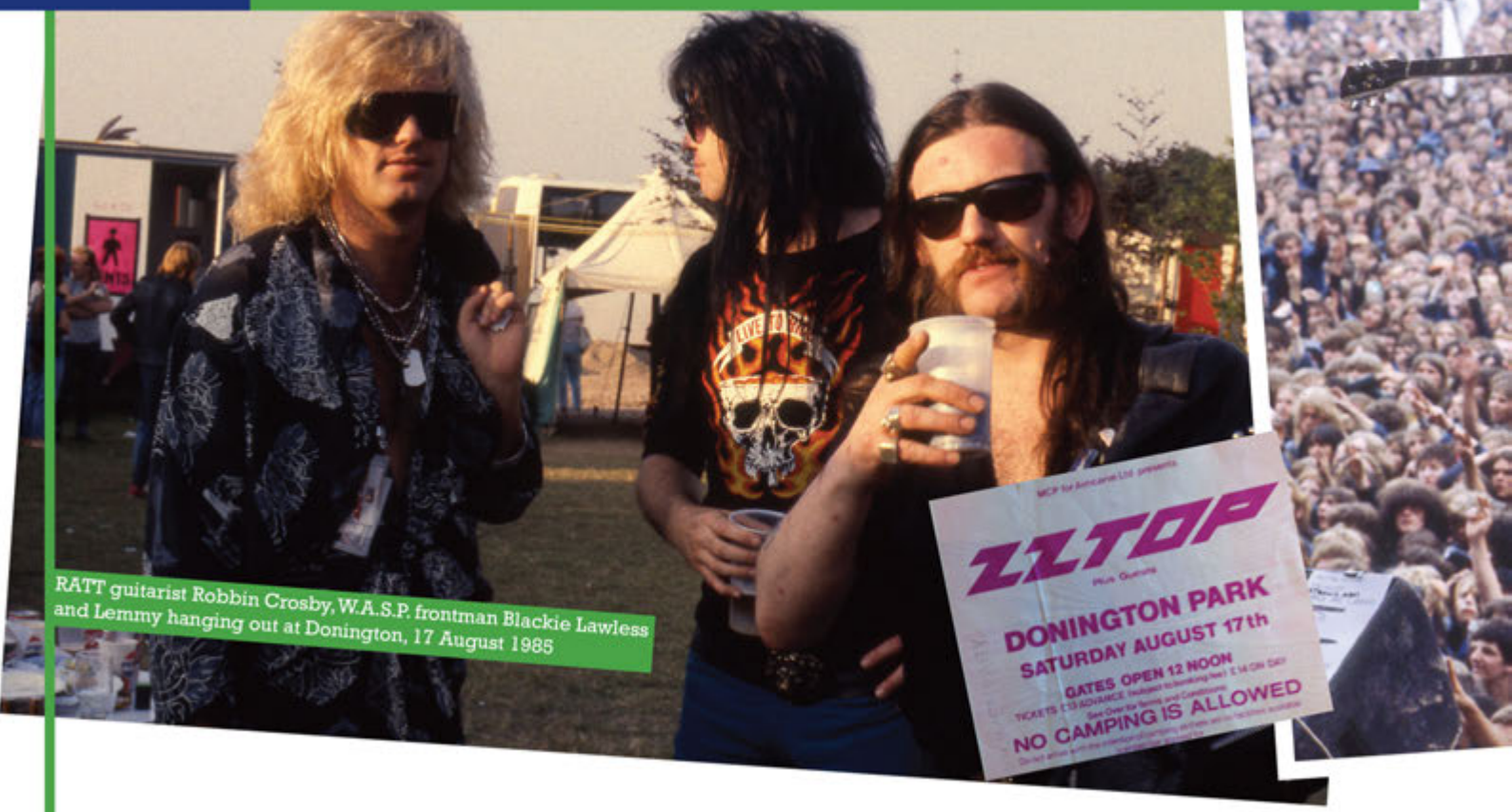


RATT guitarist Robbin Crosby, W.A.S.P. frontman Blackie Lawless and Lemmy hanging out at Donington, 17 August 1985

Even though this would prove to be Rainbow's last gig with singer Graham Bonnet and drummer Cozy Powell (the former having already signalled his intention to quit, dissatisfied at the more pop rock direction band leader and guitarist Ritchie Blackmore had chosen to follow) they had nonetheless prepared a spectacular set and stage show, perfect for closing the day.

But Donington was about more than a bunch of great bands all appearing on the same stage. To fully appreciate the cultural impact of the event, it's important to remember just how underground heavy music still was at this time. You never saw rock bands on TV outside the confines of 'Whispering' Bob Harris's late night broadcast *The Old Grey Whistle Test* or a super-rare *Top Of The Pops* appearance. National UK radio had just a couple of hours on a Friday night dedicated to rock via Tommy Vance ("TV on the radio") and a Saturday afternoon show presented by Alan 'Fluff' Freeman. If you were into rock in the UK, then you were outside of the mainstream by default. If you wore denim and leather with a patched battle jacket you were in a cultural niche, marginalised by the rest of society. Donington facilitated a gathering of the tribes in a truly visceral way: there you could see with your own eyes that you weren't alone, that you weren't a freak for liking heavy music, that there were thousands of other people just like you. This was one of the main reasons why the festival became so loved. And so iconic for rock fans the world over.

"THERE WAS something about the fact that it was such a big space that made a huge difference, and the atmosphere was really friendly," says Andy Copping. "I'm sure that's why it took off as a festival so quickly. All the bands were greeted as heroes at that first show."

Saxon guitarist Graham Oliver remembers the first Donington vividly. "The roar of the crowd when we hit the stage was unforgettable," he says. "I remember thinking, 'This is the metal Woodstock.' After our set I was going to watch the Scorpions when a Mercedes pulled up right behind the stage. The window came down and it was Ritchie Blackmore. He spoke as if we were old friends and told us we'd played a great set."

Biff Byford, Saxon's legendary singer, also looks back on the day with affection: "That first time was fantastic," he said. "Obviously it was the first major festival in England. Maybe Europe, but definitely in Britain. We were one of the rising stars of the metal scene back then, and we'd had a very big album, 'Wheels of Steel'. So it was just great walking onstage in front of people who all knew the songs. That was a new thing for us. Plus I went for a ride on Rob Halford's Harley-Davidson around the track. He didn't know I'd done it, though!"

> "THE ROAR OF THE CROWD WHEN WE HIT THE STAGE WAS UNFORGETTABLE. I REMEMBER THINKING, 'THIS IS THE METAL WOODSTOCK.'"
> **SAXON GUITARIST GRAHAM OLIVER**

THE FACT that the spirit backstage was mirrored in the crowd was all the more amazing because the facilities provided for the paying public were so awful. The toilets are remembered by one and all as both appalling and terrifying. Tommy Knight, who was there as a fan for that first event, has never forgotten them. "Those toilets weren't just bad, they were evil," he recalls. "I stood there, eyes closed, holding my breath and proceeded to pee all over my feet – just as Judas Priest came on stage."

What Tommy missed while he was piddling on his shoes was Rob Halford taking to the stage on the Harley whose seat had already been warmed by Biff. "I remember feeling immensely proud to be up there

Saxon guitarist Graham Oliver brings it to the Donington masses in 1982

Metallica's Lars Ulrich feels the full force of the Monsters of Rock PA in 1985

banging my head with thousands of metal heads in sync with us," said the band's guitarist KK Downing. Donington had that effect on a man.

At this time Priest were using a decent amount of pyro in their set. But after hearing that Rainbow had planned the mother of all firework displays to close the show, Priest decided to abandon theirs and simply divvied up their firework stash. On Bonfire Night later in the year, singer Rob Halford decided to let off his fireworks in his own back garden. And while Rainbow might have had enough to entertain the entire Donington crowd, Rob's personal stash was still more than enough to frighten the living daylights out of the good folk of suburban Birmingham. The police were duly called by neighbours who, naturally enough, had thought World War III was underway!

BACK IN 1980 you could bring your own food and, more importantly, alcohol to Donington. It feels almost surreal to think people were allowed to bring God-knows-what devilish brew on site, so long as it was in a plastic bottle. And nobody who ever went to these events will forget the sky turning black as bottles thrown by drunken punters rained down – often filled with dregs of booze, but more often filled with piss. The sense of camaraderie that existed at the first Monsters Of Rock didn't extend to refraining from covering a complete stranger in urine.

The lucrative business of merchandising was handled somewhat differently back then too, with some fans remembering people wandering around the site selling commemorative T-shirts – presumably knock-off – out of carrier bags. It was all a long way from today's tightly controlled operations.

> "WE WERE BRIGHT-EYED AND COMPLETELY STAR-STRUCK AND WERE SO PSYCHED TO COME IN THERE AND BE A PART OF THAT WHOLE DONINGTON THING."
> **METALLICA DRUMMER LARS ULRICH**

There was no doubt that the great leap into the rock festival unknown that was Monsters of Rock 1980 was a huge success. Rainbow sent everyone away happy with a brilliant version of 'Long Live Rock'n'Roll' and fans left the site to battle their way home, have a good long bath (because of course there had been tons of mud), and to tell everyone about how absolutely awesome the festival had been.

DESPITE THE fact that nobody had originally conceived of Monsters of Rock as an annual event, it soon became clear that this was definitely the way to go. So on 22 August 1981 Donington again played host to the festival as AC/DC, Whitesnake, Blue Öyster Cult, Slade, Blackfoot and More entertained 65,000 rockers. People were only just beginning to wake up to the power of such an event. Slade, for example, had faded since their glam rock heyday of the early '70s, and hardly anybody would have regarded their Donington appearance as a reason to buy a ticket. But the band's performance that day – raw, rocking and, above all, great fun – brought about an instant career revival. Blue Öyster Cult, on the other hand, turned in a rotten set, felt it was one of their worst ever gigs and damaged their reputation in the UK.

Whitesnake guitarist Bernie Marsden had an entirely different experience of Donington '81: "I regard the show as the most memorable of festival gigs, even though we weren't headliners. I remember looking out from the stage and realising the crowd was as big in width as it was in length and that shook me a little. Word has it that 140,000 could have been there that day, and I believe it." There's no evidence that such a huge number of people *were* there that day, but you can understand why the view from the stage might lead to that assumption.

TRYING TO maintain the impressively high standards of the first two years' line-ups was always going to be tricky, and the third edition of Monsters of Rock in 1982 – featuring Status Quo, Gillan, Saxon, Hawkwind, Uriah Heep and Anvil – was widely regarded as somewhat substandard. "I looked at the line up and it thought it was a bit stodgy," says metal fan Cheryl Findlayson. "I went anyway and I still had a great time, but only Gillan and Saxon were any good."

Still, Canadian frontman Lips, whose band Anvil opened proceedings on 21 August, has fond ►

Photos: IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive; IconicPix/George Chin

UNCOVERED

Poison vocalist Bret Michaels. US managers worked out that by playing Donington you got to a whole nation's hardcore audience in one fell swoop

Warlock singer Doro Pesch. The first woman to appear at Donington

Def Leppard rock till they drop in 1986

memories of the day. "I had the opportunity to have been friends with Howard Johnson from *Kerrang!* magazine," he recalls, "and he began introducing me to various people to my complete amazement. Some such people were Gary Barden and Dee Snider. It was very exciting for me."

"I fell asleep during Quo and Hawkwind – as, I believe, did Quo and Hawkwind," says fan Jack Smith. "But I wasn't bothered because I was camping with my girlfriend and I'd just lost my virginity. We both had."

No official data exists relating the lack of quality of the bands on the bill with increased sexual activity. But if anecdotal evidence is to be believed, tents would have been shaking a little less in 1983 as Whitesnake headlined for the first time. "They blew the sky off!" says fan Doug Watson. The band's frontman David Coverdale isn't inclined to disagree. "We shot the video for *Whitesnake Commandos* there and they're all good memories, all positive. Playing at home, isn't it?"

A highlight of Whitesnake's set was drummer Cozy Powell's solo – based on the music from the film *633 Squadron* and Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture – while being strafed by spotlights from a couple of helicopters.

The complete 1983 bill was Whitesnake, Meat Loaf, ZZ Top, Twisted Sister, Dio and Diamond Head. And while Whitesnake have nothing but fond memories of their headlining appearance, poor old Meat Loaf was on the receiving end of a much less enthusiastic Donington welcome. "They threw everything and the kitchen sink at him," said Twisted Sister guitarist Jay Jay French. "Mud pies... toilet paper."

Not everybody lower down the bill got such a rough ride, though. "They didn't throw any mud at us," said Dio frontman Ronnie James Dio. "And being that we were second on the bill we should've been a good target. Those people certainly respected what I'd done before with Sabbath and Rainbow, so they gave me the same kind of respect that I always give them."

MEAT LOAF may never forget Donington 1983, but the year was more significant for marking the first Monsters of Rock shows to be held outside the UK, when three festivals took place in West Germany. The bill at each event was different from the UK – with Blue Öyster Cult, Thin Lizzy, Saxon and Motörhead replacing ZZ Top, Dio and Diamond Head – but the brand was clearly used, and accepted, as an endorsement of rock quality.

German metal fan, Jorgen Wolker, recalls those days. "We'd all heard about Donington and it was driving us crazy because we wanted that kind of festival in West Germany. Metal was massive here," he says. "When we heard Monsters of Rock was coming to Dortmund, we went totally ape. Whitesnake blew my mind, man. It was the best day of my life."

"Things were very informal back then. Maurice had good relations with European promoters, so he just let them use the name," adds Andy Copping. "It was less of a 'we own the brand' attitude. These days it'd be a major legal thing, but then it was just, 'Yeah you can use it'."

DEBATES AS to which was the best of the 15 Castle Donington Monsters of Rock events that ran between 1980 and 1996 rage long and late into the night. But many fans feel 1984 set the gold standard, with a bill featuring AC/DC, Van Halen, Ozzy Osbourne, Dio, Y&T, Gary Moore, Accept and Mötley Crüe.

"I couldn't believe that line-up when it was announced," says Steven Ennis, who was there on the day. "Eight brilliant bands. Afterwards I told anyone who'd listen that this day would never be topped. And it never was. It was probably the best gig ever in the history of rock and metal."

With 60,000 rabid fans crammed into the bowl, it was down to Mötley Crüe to open the show with their first Monsters of Rock appearance. Now sadly deceased, Y&T bassist Phil Kennemore was staying at the same hotel as the LA sleaze rockers. "Mötley Crüe were hanging at the bar," he recounted. "The first thing Tommy Lee said was, 'Where can I get some flesh?' I said, 'Good luck dude. We're in England. The punters here are all dudes.'"

That was the least of the American bands' worries, though. Remember that Donington tradition of piss bottles? Y&T frontman Dave Meniketti was about to be introduced to the ritual... "Having bottles of piss hit my guitar and splatter up my body while performing was a real downer," he said with admirable understatement.

As was customary, the rain of piss ceased when the bigger bands came on. According to the punters, second-on-the-bill Van Halen responded by being either brilliantly spontaneous, or sloppy and self-indulgent, depending on your point of view. Frontman David Lee Roth, playing what would be his final UK gig with the band, was happily bantering with the audience, offering to buy everyone beer and talking about carnal relations with ladies in typical DLR fashion.

"I was right at the front next to this gorgeous woman, and Dave is doing his thing right in front of her, generally thrusting his groin all over the place," says Terry Williams. "The bloke this girl was with – a big hairy biker dude – shouted at Roth that he'd rip his balls off if he did that again. And he didn't. Dave was not exactly sober, but he was sober enough not to take that bloke on."

1984 WAS also the year that the Monsters of Rock brand was rolled out further across Europe with shows in Sweden and Switzerland, as well as two in West Germany and two in Italy. But unlike the previous year in West Germany, this was less of a tour and more a series of gigs with the Monsters of Rock name tagged onto it.

The shows in Nettuno and Turin, Italy were actually just AC/DC and Mötley. In Stockholm it was AC/DC, Van Halen and the Crüe. The Swiss saw the Donington bill minus Ozzy and Y&T, but with Dio added. Shows in Germany, meanwhile – at Karlsruhe and Nuremberg – featured AC/DC, Van Halen, Ozzy Osbourne, Dio, Gary Moore, Accept and Mötley Crüe. Euro rockers had heard about Donington and wanted to experience it in their own country.

A fan's eye view of Twisted Sister in 1983

"I was living near Rome at the time," says Ali Waters. "And even though the nearby Nettuno show was actually just a regular gig, the fact it was billed as a 'Monsters...' event definitely raised our excitement levels. It made it more special."

This was how things would work in Europe in future years. Bills were often a little different, but all were stamped with the Monsters seal of approval. Why? Because Monsters of Rock at Donington was the undisputed heavy rock mecca of the European festival circuit.

> "NOTHING WILL EVER BEAT THE FEELING THAT DONINGTON GAVE YOU WHEN YOU FIRST GOT THERE, PITCHED YOUR TENT, LIT A FIRE AND SAW EVERYONE ELSE IN THEIR DENIM AND LEATHER."
> **FAN IAIN STEWART**

THE FOLLOWING year, in 1985, a reported 80,000 fans saw the ZZ Top car flown in by helicopter, while Metallica made their debut on a bill that also included Marillion, Bon Jovi, RATT and Magnum.

"Growing up as a fan of music and metal, clutching my copies of *Sounds* and *Kerrang!* as I grew up through the '80s, getting to see Metallica's name on a Donington poster in 1985 was obviously a big deal," says the band's drummer Lars Ulrich. "We were bright-eyed and completely star struck and were so psyched to come in there and be a part of that whole thing."

Many American bands weren't quite as clued-in as Metallica on the British and European metal scenes. But Donington's reputation as a quick, simple, and very effective way of reaching a mass audience was by now well established.

The 1986 bill was noteworthy for Warlock singer Doro Pesch being the first woman to perform on a Donington stage, and for Def Leppard making an emotional comeback in the wake of drummer Rick Allen's horrific car accident. Ozzy topped the bill, and Scorpions, Motörhead and TV spoof metal band Bad News made up the numbers. But 1987's show was much more interesting for the fact that it was the first time the home of British metal featured an all-American bill. Bon Jovi headlined, with Dio, Metallica, Anthrax, W.A.S.P. and Cinderella bringing up the rear. American managers had worked out that by playing Donington you reached a whole nation's hardcore audience in one fell swoop.

"They had nothing like it in the States," says Andy Copping. "So American acts could fly in, get great exposure in front of a big audience and fly straight back out again."

"That was the show you knew your band *had* to ►

Photos: Getty Images/Brian Rasic; IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive; Julia Goode; Getty Images/Tin Costello/Redferns

play," confirms Cinderella's manager at the time, Larry Mazer. "You just had to play Donington. It was so big. Not just in numbers, but in status."

As Bon Jovi closed the 1987 show, bathing in the success of their 'Slippery When Wet' album that had gone triple platinum in the UK and was *Billboard*'s best selling album of 1987 in the US, it seemed like the good times would last forever. Everyone was making money, the crowds loved going to Donington, and all the bands wanted to appear on the bill. What could possibly go wrong?

> "THAT WAS THE SHOW YOU KNEW YOUR BAND *HAD* TO PLAY. YOU JUST HAD TO PLAY DONINGTON. IT WAS SO BIG. NOT JUST IN NUMBERS, BUT IN STATUS."
> **CINDERELLA MANAGER LARRY MAZER**

1988 PROVIDED another watershed moment for the brand as a Monsters of Rock tour hit the road in the US from 27 May to 30 July. The bill featured Kingdom Come, Metallica, Dokken and Scorpions, with Van Halen taking top billing.

In *Bang Your Head – The Rise and Fall of Heavy Metal*, author David Konow quotes Dokken bassist Jeff Pilson. "There was a lot of personal and chemical camaraderie, and booze and drugs were in abundance," he recalls. "There were a lot of 3am calls. 'Yeah, Jeff? Got any?' And I usually did. In that respect it was a tremendously fun tour."

Iron Maiden milk the applause after headlining in 1988

Even the notoriously hard-living Metallica (nicknamed Alcoholica at the time) were surprised at just how much Van Halen could handle. "They were partiers, no doubt," said James Hetfield. "I couldn't believe how a band could be around that long and party hardcore like that."

But it wasn't all laughs. The tour had an expensive 51 trucks hauling 971 tons of gear around, including a huge stage. Some dates didn't sell out, there were equipment failures at others. A gig in Maine nearly ended in a riot after a lengthy delay due to rain. In LA the power was pulled during Metallica's set because of aggressive behaviour by fans and 15 people were arrested. It was the first evidence that the Monsters of Rock brand wasn't a guarantee of peace, love and, above all, profit. With rumours of the promoters losing six figure numbers, this was the first and last Stateside Monsters of Rock tour.

BACK IN the UK, however, Donington still ruled. As the ninth edition of Monsters of Rock, scheduled for 20 August 1988, approached, no one could have known exactly how much one day would change the way future festivals would look, not just in UK, but all over the world.

The line-up for the day looked good, with British metal heroes Iron Maiden headlining over a strong supporting cast of Kiss, David Lee Roth, Megadeth, Guns N'Roses and Helloween. But tragedy was about to strike.

It rained constantly from Monday to Thursday in the week before the show. The ground turned into a horrible muddy quagmire. Guns N'Roses were due to follow German act Helloween as the second act. But in the short time since agreeing to appear so low down on the bill, Guns had become the biggest band on the planet.

"I couldn't believe how many people were there that day," remembers Andy Copping. "20,000 people turned up on the day and bought a ticket! 20,000! You'll get a hundred or two at most today. My mates and I would always meet up behind the mixing desk. It was a central point that everyone could find and there was always space behind it. But in 1988 you couldn't get near it. It was absolute mayhem. 107,000 were let in that day."

Guns N'Roses fan David Turton remembers insane excitement about getting to see America's hottest new rock band. "We were gonna see Guns," he explains. "The anticipation was almost overwhelming. When they came on and played 'It's So Easy' there was a huge rush towards the stage and I was carried forward, feet off the ground at one point! Before 'Paradise City' I recall Steven Adler coming out from behind his drums, saying something in Slash's ear and pointing at something. The band stopped the show and asked us all to move back. So you knew something was going on, but had no idea what, really. There was just general mayhem. The mud was like glue. I was jammed between people. I was only 17, it was my first festival, so I didn't know it wasn't always like this. But I was scared witless. Later, when I heard two people had died, I felt sick. It could've been me. It could have been any of us." Steven Adler would later say, "To this day, the Donington tragedy haunts me like a waking nightmare."

Thirty people were injured during the Guns show and two young men, Allan Dick and Landon Siggers, lost their lives. This unspeakable tragedy led to crash barriers being put in at break points to prevent such a deathly crush ever happening again at a festival. There were also changes to how the Donington festival stage was built, and a new crowd limit of 75,000.

In the aftermath it seemed almost indecent to think of enjoying a rock festival, especially on the same site. Monsters of Rock took a sabbatical in 1989. The local council wouldn't grant a licence, but it's probably also true to say that nobody had much appetite for it in the wake of the Guns N'Roses incident.

DONINGTON RETURNED in 1990, complete with a live BBC Radio 1 broadcast in the UK, but many of those who returned expressed an intangible feeling that things had changed. 1989 had already seen the release of Nirvana's first album, 'Bleach', and while nobody can claim to have known that grunge was about to change the rock landscape forever when the bill for Donington 1990 was announced, there was an undercurrent of a seismic shift

about to take place. Not that the line-up of Thunder, Quireboys, Poison, Aerosmith and headliners Whitesnake gave any hint of what was to come.

You could argue that the original, legendary Donington era ended with Whitesnake's third appearance and their second headline show. As the band closed their set in front of a sell-out crowd with their epic 'Still Of The Night', there was a distinct feeling of melancholy. "Thank you for your remarkable hospitality Donington," said Coverdale, sounding for all the world like he was marking not just the end of the show, but the end of an era.

OVER THE next two years both AC/DC (for a third time) and Iron Maiden (for a second) would headline Donington again. In 1993 there was another hiatus simply because no headliner big enough to carry a Monsters of Rock show could be found. When the festival returned in 1994 there were two stages, but the glory days were over. In their hearts everyone knew it was only a matter of time before the Monster would be killed off. And that came to pass in 1996 with Kiss as headliners.

"The festival didn't move with the times," says Andy Copping. "The biggest bands were more reluctant to play and, ironically, the Monsters of Rock name worked against it because it was so associated with the '80s and a style of music that fell out of fashion almost overnight."

The Monsters of Rock brand didn't disappear completely. It was attached to further concerts in South America and across Europe, and even a radio station in the States. In 2006, a Monsters of Rock event was held at the National Bowl in Milton Keynes, headlined by Deep Purple with Alice Cooper as a special guest. Since 2012 there have also been Monsters of Rock cruises, perhaps reflecting how the Donington generation now like to holiday. But the vibe is different, more nostalgia for the glory days of the '80s than a contemporary rock festival.

Of course the successor to Monsters of Rock, Download, has taken place at the original site since back in 2003 and has been a huge success. Andy Copping is heavily involved in the festival to this day and confirms how important the venue itself is to musicians. "No one refers to those '80s festivals as Monsters of Rock any more. It's just 'Donington'. Even now, bands who played at the site in those days look back on it really fondly. And to new bands it really is holy ground."

WRITING THIS piece about the greatest British metal festival, I've drawn on the experiences of lots of *Rock Candy* readers and friends. And they all felt the same way about Donington. It was *the* rock and metal people's festival – a yearly meet-up to recharge your batteries with rock'n'roll, and to confirm your identity and your culture, no matter where you lived in the country. I shall leave the final word to my friend Iain Stewart, because his words express what many feel.

"I went to every Donington from 1980 to 1990 and I loved every one. Donington took me as a 17-year-old boy and helped turn me into a man with a wife and son. It was the most formative experience of my life. I still love the music, but nothing will ever beat the feeling that Donington gave you when you first got there, pitched your tent, lit a fire and saw everyone else in their denim and leather. It felt like we were one big army. Donington was, and still is, our spiritual home."

Thanks to Ian Carroll's book 'Monsters Of Rock: The Unofficial History of the MOR Festivals at Donington Park' (available on Amazon as paperback and Kindle).

Photos: IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive; Julia Goode; IconicPix/George Chin; IconicPix/Alan Perry; IconicPix/David Plastik

SIX OF THE BEST
THE FANS' VERDICT

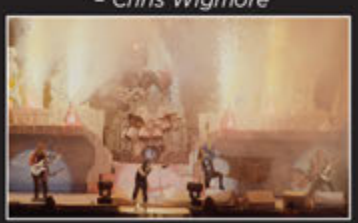
RAINBOW 1980
"They were superb. Bonnet's jacket, Cozy's drum solo and the impromptu version of 'Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?' Awesome." – *Bill Collins*

MÖTLEY CRÜE 1984
"They played a blinder and absolutely lived up to the hype at the time, which was huge after 'Shout At The Devil'."
– *Steve Torrens*

OZZY 1984
"Just mental. A bloke next to me had a pig's head on a stick, Ozzy wouldn't leave the stage and Sharon and Tommy Vance had to escort him off."
– *Joe Mackett*

DEF LEPPARD 1986
"An incredible experience for the overwhelming wave of emotion during the standing ovation for Rick Allen."
– *John Atkin*

GUNS N'ROSES 1988
"The anticipation was astonishing and Guns didn't disappoint. A well-oiled, snake-hipped groove machine that instantly made every other band on the bill look like dinosaurs."
– *Chris Wigmore*



IRON MAIDEN 1988
"Their version of 'Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son' that night still sends shivers down my spine! Totally awesome!"
– *Jon Parr*

Golden Earring photographed in Amsterdam, 1973. From top left clockwise: Barry Hay (vocals), George Kooymans (guitar), Rinus Gerritsen (bass), Cesar Zuiderwijk (drums)

GOLDEN EARRING - 'MOONTAN'

DATELINE: JULY 1973

DUTCH ROCKERS **GOLDEN EARRING** FINALLY BROKE BIG WITH THIS, THEIR NINTH ALBUM. BUT HAS IT AGED WELL? READ ON...

GOLDEN EARRING
'Moontan' (Polydor/Track Records/MCA)
Released: July 1973

LINE UP
BARRY HAY – vocals, flute
GEORGE KOOYMANS – guitar
RINUS GERRITSEN – bass, keyboards
CESAR ZUIDERWIJK – drums

ADDITIONAL MUSICIANS
EELCO GELLING – slide guitar
BERTUS BORGERS – saxophone
PATRICIA PAAY – vocals

PRODUCED BY
Golden Earring

RECORDED AT
Phonogram Studio, the Netherlands. Mixed at I.B.C. Studios London

TRACK LISTING
Original UK/US version
Radar Love (G. Kooymans/B. Hay)
Candy's Going Bad (G. Kooymans/B. Hay)
Vanilla Queen (G. Kooymans/B. Hay)
Big Tree, Blue Sea (G. Kooymans/B. Hay)
Are You Receiving Me (G. Kooymans/B. Hay/J.Fenton)

Original Dutch version
Candy's Going Bad
Are You Receiving Me
Suzy Lunacy (Mental Rock) (G. Kooymans/B. Hay/J.Fenton)
Radar Love
Just Like Vince Taylor (G. Kooymans/B. Hay)
Vanilla Queen

WHICH CLASSIC ALBUMS WOULD YOU LIKE US TO REVISIT?
EMAIL: EDITORIAL@ROCKCANDYMAG.COM

BARRY HAY ON 'MOONTAN': "We didn't know what we were doing then. We were thinking about breaking up the band and we thought, 'Let's just make one more album and see what happens.' We never expected the album to be as successful as it was."

THE PROBLEM FOR GOLDEN Earring was that they never really crawled out from underneath the all-encompassing shadow of their best and most well known track, 'Radar Love', featured in all its glory on 'Moontan', of course. As great as the song was – and still is – the band struggled for years to make any further impact until 1982's 'Cut' album, which spawned the equally impressive 'Twilight Zone'. The song made it all the way to the Top Ten of the US *Billboard* Hot 100 singles chart.

Formed in their native Holland – the Hague to be precise – in 1961, Golden Earrings (the 's' was dropped in 1969) started out by issuing a succession of beat and pop tracks that have been conveniently re-packaged over the years on several albums. By 1970, however, the band had evolved into a fully-fledged rock band with prog and psychedelic tinges, influenced by English acts such as The Who and The Move.

THE WHO eventually took Golden Earring under their wing. A 1972 European tour support slot with Daltrey and Townshend's mob followed, as did a deal with The Who's own label, Track Records, in the UK. In the midst of this upward career curve Golden Earring crafted 'Moontan', a staggering effort that was right up there artistically with the very best acts of the day. When the record – their ninth – was released in July of 1973 the band's latent potential was finally fully realised. 'Moontan' is one of the era's best albums and features one of the greatest tracks of all time in 'Radar Love', a song that exploded the myth that only the UK and US could produce great rock music.

BUT 'MOONTAN' is about so much more than 'Radar Love'. The album's beauty lies in the overall complexity and widescreen ambition of its six songs – five if you're dealing with the original UK/US release of the album. The songwriting is wonderfully evocative and literary, exposing depths of emotion and performance that other bands could barely attempt, never mind pull off. Singer Barry Hay emits a wonderful vocal tone, located midway between Mick Jagger and Roger Daltrey, with his melodious Dutch accent adding a unique timbre to his voice. Lyrically, meanwhile, we're entering into a world of time-slips, from early 20th century bourgeois nostalgia to hallucinogenic '60s beatnik babble. The track 'Vanilla Queen', for example, moves from references to late '50s Parisian showgirls to the lasting cultural impression left by Marilyn Monroe, the latter via actual spoken word snippets from the Hollywood siren. It's an awful long way from meat and potatoes rock.

AND YET for all its eclecticism 'Moontan' works brilliantly as a whole. The cohesion is absolutely compelling, as the album's opening two tracks (again on the UK/US version) amply demonstrate. The full version of 'Radar Love', with its classic opening gambit of *"I've been drivin' all night, my hand's wet on the wheel... There's a voice in my head that drives my heel,"* is as iconic a start to a song as you can get. Then 'Candy's Going Bad', a cautionary tale of the proverbial good girl going off the rails, manages to maintain the opener's high standard.

THE SONGWRITING IS WONDERFULLY EVOCATIVE AND LITERARY, EXPOSING DEPTHS OF EMOTION AND PERFORMANCE THAT OTHER BANDS COULD BARELY ATTEMPT, NEVER MIND PULL OFF.

It's not just the strong songs that make 'Moontan' so impressive, but also the way Golden Earring *approach* the tracks. There's a restraint in their playing that allows the power to seep out, like dry ice slowly drifting across a stage. 'Vanilla Queen', for example, is over nine minutes long, but at no point does it feel tired or over-egged. The song provides a superb showcase for the band's musical dexterity, carefully crafted and wonderfully erudite, with a tremendously evocative solo from criminally underappreciated guitar genius George Kooymans.

'Moontan' gets the full US record company marketing treatment on a billboard on Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, 1974

THE SECOND side of the international version of the vinyl album was given over to just two tracks, 'Big Tree, Blue Sea' and 'Are You Receiving Me'. The former is actually a re-recording of a number from the band's eponymous 1970 album, borderline progressive rock with shades of Jethro Tull embedded in its DNA. The latter is, perhaps unsurprisingly, an anthemic lunge in the general direction of The Who. Typical of territorial variations, two tracks adorned the original Dutch version that failed to make an appearance elsewhere, namely 'Just Like Vince Taylor', about the troubled English 1950s rock'n'roll singer, and 'Suzy Lunacy (Mental Rock)', a Stones pastiche that is probably the weakest song of a super-strong set. Whichever version of 'Moontan' you get your hands on, though, this is clearly a landmark album from a band that has never been given enough credit for its achievements.
DEREK OLIVER

THE ORIGINAL REVIEWS

"British hit 'Radar Love' (which could have been more adroitly edited) remains a superbly mesmeric highway rocker, complete with a delightful reference to Brenda Lee's 1966 'Coming On Strong' and a great hook of a chorus. If Golden Earring conquers its distracting improvisational tendencies, it will be a band to be reckoned with."
– Ken Barnes, *Rolling Stone*, 20 June 1974

"A top Dutch band that could break here with an interesting mix of hard rock as on 'Radar Love', and more gentle material like 'Vanilla Queen'."
– *Billboard*, 1974

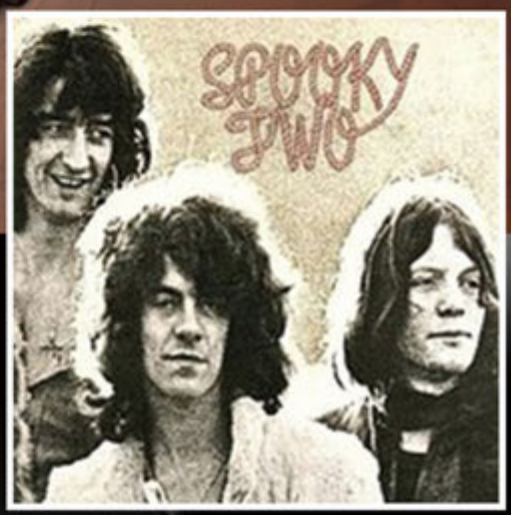
'MOONTAN' FACT: Due to its saucy, Roxy Music style cover, the original 'showgirl' sleeve for 'Moontan' was changed for the American release, to be replaced by a rather boring image of an ear and an earring!

Photos: Getty Images/Gijsbert Hanekroot/Redferns; Getty Images/Gordon Jandro

STRIKTLY FOR KONNOISSEURS

MONSTER ROCK ALBUMS FOR THOSE WHO NEED TO GO DEEPER

Spooky Tooth keyboardist and vocalist Mike Harrison pours his heart into it at the Gladsaxe Teen Club, Copenhagen, Denmark, 14 December 1968



SPOOKY TOOTH – 'Spooky Two'

(ISLAND)

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1969

LINE UP
MIKE HARRISON – KEYBOARDS AND VOCALS
LUTHER GROSVENOR – GUITAR
GARY WRIGHT – KEYBOARDS AND VOCALS
GREG RIDLEY – BASS
MIKE KELLIE – DRUMS

THE RECEIVED WISDOM IS that heavy metal's year zero was 1970, when Black Sabbath released their eponymous debut in February, just four months before Deep Purple's 'In Rock'. To accept this as fact, however, would be to ignore this magnificent album, released in early '69, a whole year before those two giant efforts.

SPOOKY TOOTH started life as Art, whose 1967 album, 'Supernatural Fairy Tales', can claim to be the first genuinely heavy garage rock album to emerge from the UK. The fact that it came out during the Summer of Love, though, meant it was roundly ignored at the time. Spooky Tooth rose from the ashes of Art and the group's various members would go on to become stalwarts of the '70s rock scene. Nine months after the band's promising debut, June 1968's 'It's All About', the band dished up a sophomore effort, 'Spooky Two', in March of '69.

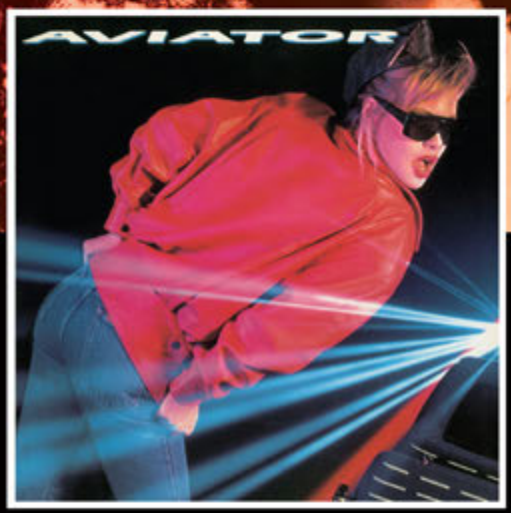
HERE SPOOKY Tooth followed their harder-edged leanings to conjure up a sound of immense power. Like fellow rock travellers Black Sabbath, on opening number 'Waitin' For The Wind' the band realised that to slow down was to ratchet up both intensity and power. Their interpretation of Canned Heat's 'Evil Woman', meanwhile, provided a blueprint for the riff-based heavy rock that would follow in its wake. But like all the great heavy albums, 'Spooky Two' isn't all fire and brimstone and the band are equally comfortable working slower, soulful, numbers. 'Feelin' Bad' has an intriguing gospel vibe, while 'That Was Only Yesterday' would be an FM standard had it been picked up by, say, Rod Stewart. The emotional 'Lost In My Dream' takes the band in a more keyboard-oriented prog direction, and 'Better By You, Better Than Me' is arguably Spooky Tooth's best known number thanks to Judas Priest's powerhouse remodel from 1978's 'Stained Class' album. Here in its original form, though, the song has a nimbler, subtler quality.

UNSURPRISINGLY, ALL of Spooky Tooth would go on to greater things; guitarist Luther Grosvenor (calling himself Ariel Bender) to Mott the Hoople, bassist Greg Ridley to Humble Pie, drummer Mike Kellie to The Only Ones, and singer Gary Wright to a stellar solo career in the US. Sadly, a great rock talent was lost when kingpin keyboardist and vocalist Mike Harrison left the music business for over 20 years, shortly after Spooky Tooth dissolved in November 1974. Harrison died, aged 72, in March of this year. His greatest legacy is this album, because there surely can't be another band whose ratio of commercial to artistic success has been so off kilter.

Giles Hamilton

Photo: Getty Images/Jorgen Angel/Redferns

Aviator in their high-flying days. L-R: Richie Cerniglia (guitars), Michael Ricciardella (drums), Ernie White (vocals), Steve Vitale (bass)



AVIATOR – 'Aviator'

(RCA)

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1986

LINE UP
RICHIE CERNIGLIA – GUITARS
STEVE VITALE – BASS
MICHAEL RICCIARDELLA – DRUMS
ERNIE WHITE– VOCALS

THERE WERE A LOT of extremely talented musicians playing AOR back in 1986, but despite this, not all of the groups they belonged to were rewarded with commercial success. New York-based Aviator is one perfect example, a band that had absolutely everything going for it – except record sales!

GUITARIST RICHIE Cerniglia and drummer Michael Ricciardella first worked together in The Illusion, cutting three albums between 1969 and 1970 before having another go at making it in Wiggy Bits – a group featuring vocalist Peppy Castro from Balance – and then Network. When they put Aviator together in 1984, Cerniglia and Ricciardella hooked up with bassist Steve Vitale, who'd previously worked with Ellen Shipley, and vocalist Ernie White, who was fresh from a stint with Casablanca act Sam The Band.

AVIATOR WERE managed by the much-respected Tommy Mottola, who would later guide the stellar careers of Mariah Carey and Celine Dion as boss of Sony Music. But not even Mottola could break this band. Having signed with RCA, Aviator went into the studio with top producer Neil Kernon, whose credits include Autograph, Michael Bolton and Dokken. Kernon was one of the hottest producers around at the time, and the fact that RCA hired him to work with Aviator shows that the label had great hopes for the band.

'AVIATOR' WAS recorded at Electric Lady Studios in New York and proved to be the band's only album. That's a tragedy, because this is a one-shot deal that deserved to be a massive success. Building on Ernie White's rich vocal tones, Aviator crafted 11 songs of lush hard rock majesty, precursing a sound that Kernon would later hone and refine on FM's 'Tough It Out' album.

AVIATOR'S SOUND could almost single-handedly define the AOR genre. Album opener 'Front Line' sets out the band's manifesto, and with the brilliant pop/rock of 'Don't Turn Away', the anthemic 'Never Let The Rock Stop', and the pleasingly urgent 'Can't Stop' all maintaining high standards, this album really is a musical *tour de force*.

SO WHY did such a great record get left at the starting gate? Hard to tell, but RCA's acquisition by the BMG group at the time probably didn't help. All we really know for sure is that 'Aviator' is a fine legacy from an unheralded band.

Rob Evans

ROCK CANDY REISSUES

THE VERY LATEST HOT RE-RELEASES FROM THE LABEL

MORNINGSTAR – 'Morningstar'

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1978

LINE UP

Rick Bacus – guitars, keyboards, chimes and vocals
Jerry Chambers – guitars and vocals
Michael Edmunds – guitars, chimes and vocals
Greg Leech – bass guitar and bass synthesizer
Greg Harris – drums, percussion and vocals

BACKGROUND

You may never have heard of Morningstar, but that's no reason not to make a space in your life for them now. You see, there was a time during the late 1970s when the American music business was releasing an incredible volume of albums from classy rock bands that drank from the same golden goblet as Boston, Styx and Journey. British progressive rock also played a major part in many a US band's sound. And Morningstar were no exception to the rule.

Formed in Kansas in the early '70s, the band became a formidable live draw and soon attracted the attention of Columbia Records, who signed them. Their debut album was recorded in Nashville and is a fitting period piece, drawing comparisons with similar-sounding Midwest champions such as Roadmaster and Trillion. All these groups had a penchant for melody, as well as respect for classy arrangements and impressive musicianship. Morningstar, in particular, also imbibed heavily from the progressive rock world occupied by the likes of Yes, ELP, and Procol Harum.

The album made little commercial headway when it was issued in 1978, but Morningstar became regarded by those in the know as a band to watch. Several tracks stood out thanks to their hard driving edge and progressive flourishes, displaying stunning qualities that continue to impress today. Indeed, there's barely a duff track among the nine on offer.

WHAT GUITARIST AND VOCALIST RICK BACUS SAYS

"I remember we did a radio interview in Oklahoma and were going on to a local record store to do a signing session. But when we got there we found that the store didn't have *one* copy of our album. To be asked to do an in-store appearance and then find the label hadn't bothered to make sure there were copies of our record to sign was terrible. That convinced us we weren't taken seriously by Columbia, which was depressing to say the least."

TRACKS TO CHECK OUT

Several tracks stand proud here, spearheaded by the pounding 'Turn Out All The Lights', the epic six-minute 'Through The Night', and 'Sad Lady' – a classy pomp rock prima donna blessed with layers of soaring vocals and impressive keyboards.

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

This Rock Candy CD is the first time the album's been released on CD outside Japan. It's been expanded with two previously unreleased tracks, is freshly remastered, and is all wrapped up in a 16-page full-colour booklet, with a 3,000 word essay by *Rock Candy Mag* editor at large Malcolm Dome, enhanced artwork with previously unseen photos, and full band involvement.

THE WORD FROM RC BOSS DEREK OLIVER

"In the US, the late '70s was boom time for hard rock acts, particularly those that were influenced by the likes of Kansas, Styx and Boston. Sure, Morningstar weren't as heavy as Blue Öyster Cult or April Wine, but what they lacked in oomph they made up for with melody. They were also adept at fusing melodic hard rock with pop overtones, giving them an edge that could've resulted in serious sales had their label not been caught asleep at the wheel. The artwork, too, represented the band's style perfectly – a fantasy version of the medieval weapon that shares their name, conjuring up something brave, bold and otherworldly."

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ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

METALLICA *'The $5.98 EP: Garage Days Re-Revisited'*

(BLACKENED RECORDINGS)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Originally released over 30 years ago in August of 1987, this EP was a collection of Metalli-covers of bands that were a big influence on Lars & Co. in their early daze. It's been out of print since 1989, so has long been due a re-release. Sadly the EP doesn't cost $5.98 anymore!

These were the first Metallica recordings to feature bassist Jason Newsted, and the band rehearsed the tunes in Ulrich's soundproofed garage before recording the whole caboodle at A&M Studios, Santa Monica in just six days! This new version has been specially remastered.

WHAT LARS ULRICH SAYS
"'Helpless' by Diamond Head was part of our live set going way back. The Misfits stuff was obviously just super-embedded in our bodies. Some of the stuff was more adventurous, like 'The Wait' by Killing Joke and 'Crash Course In Brain Surgery' by Budgie. Those songs we didn't have a history with and weren't songs that we'd played before. It was more of an exploratory path we were on there."

ANY EXTRAS?
Yes, 'The Wait' by Killing Joke. The track was originally omitted from UK pressings to conform to local music industry rules regarding the length of EPs. But why this particular song was left off is one of life's great mysteries. It's easily the best track here. There are some nice bass runs from Newsted on this rendition, and Hetfield and Hammett's guitars are messy as hell. In a good way! Lars Ulrich does his best at impersonating Killing Joke drummer Paul Ferguson – and almost pulls it off!

HIGHLIGHTS
There are loads! It was great to revisit these remastered versions wearing headphones. 'Helpless' really does sound like it was recorded in a garage and you can hear Lars saying, "Keep it going, let it ring out" at the end. The cover of The Misfits songs 'Last Caress/Green Hell' definitely sounds better on this version and I'd never noticed the piss-take of Iron Maiden's 'Run To The Hills' at the end of the song before. File under Metallifun!

Xavier Russell

DEEP PURPLE *Fire In The Sky*

Simon Robinson & Steven Clare

(EASY ON THE EYE)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
This book provides a genuinely in-depth look at the making of Purple's classic sixth album, 'Machine Head', which was recorded in December of 1971 in Montreux, Switzerland, and released in March of the following year. It would take a brave man to argue that the album doesn't merit this kind of anoraky approach, given that it's universally recognised as one of the most important releases in the history of metal.

WHAT RITCHIE BLACKMORE SAYS
"Simplicity is the key [to 'Smoke On The Water']. And it *is* simple. You can still hear people playing it in music stores. I never had the courage to write until I heard 'I Can't Explain' and 'My Generation'. Those riffs were so straightforward that I thought, 'All right, if Pete Townshend can get away with that, then I can too!'"

BEST BITS
The attention to detail is both remarkable and painstaking, above all giving the reader an understanding of just how exhausting Purple's recording and touring schedule was at the time. Titbits abound. Want to know the last words Frank Zappa uttered as he headed offstage when the fire that inspired 'Smoke On The Water' started to engulf the Casino where he was performing in Montreux? This is where you'll find out. A lot of the material in the book is mined from extensive interviews with Purple bassist Roger Glover, who gives a fascinating insight into how bizarre the world of Purple was back then. Given the madness that went on, you wonder how on earth such an astonishing album ever got made!

DOES IT HIT THE SPOT?
If you only have a passing interest in Purple, this isn't for you. But if you are a genuine fan this makes for an absorbing read. The authors have gone to extreme lengths to wring every last fact and piece of trivia out of the story and should be applauded for their dedication. They seem to take particular pleasure in pointing out that many Purple fans who make the pilgrimage to Montreux looking for the place where this rock masterpiece was recorded actually go to the wrong Grand Hotel!

Malcolm Dome

Photos: Getty Images/Brian Rasic; Getty Images/Michael Ochs Archives

DEF LEPPARD 'The Vinyl Box Set: Volume One'

(UMC)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
The Sheffield band's first four studio albums, 'On Through The Night' (1980), 'High 'N' Dry' (1981), 'Pyromania' (1983) and the 25 million-plus selling 'Hysteria' (1987) are all pulled together on vinyl in one rather lush package. This is a fascinating way of charting the musical evolution of a bunch of kids on their way to global rock superstardom.

WHAT JOE ELLIOTT SAYS
"We had read about Queen and the Beatles using all these toys in the studio, and we wanted to do the same thing, but within a hard rock format. Boston's debut and the first four Queen albums, they were huge productions, and that's what we wanted – a massive sound. I always dreamed of being the singer in the biggest rock'n'roll band in the world, and 'Pyromania' made it happen."

ANY EXTRAS?
Indeed there are. Besides the official studio albums, this box set also includes a double album, 'Live At The LA Forum 1983' and 'Rarities Volume One'. The former was originally released as the extra CD of the deluxe reissue of 'Pyromania', but has never before been pressed on vinyl. The latter has been specially compiled by Joe Elliott for this box set and features some interesting rare B-sides and early tracks from the band. And let's not forget a fine hardback book penned by *Rock Candy* contributor Paul Elliott.

HIGHLIGHTS
It's great to hear all four of these early studio albums again. 'On Through The Night' crackles with the energy of youth. 'High 'N' Dry' sees the band's sound developing under Mutt Lange. 'Pyromania' shows how Leppard redefined melody in rock, while 'Hysteria' gives us a band at the very top of their commercial game. As for the extras, the 'Live At The LA Forum' discs really capture the band full of confidence in the early '80s, while the 'Rarities' LP is particularly noteworthy for a quality re-recording of 'Ride Into The Sun'.

Jerry Ewing

MEGADETH 'Killing Is My Business... And Business Is Good – The Final Kill'

(CENTURY/LEGACY)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
History has invested Dave Mustaine's sacking by Metallica and subsequent formation of Megadeth with a significance that was impossible to foresee at the time. Back in 1983, it was simply someone leaving a band that few people had heard of, in a genre that appeared to be narrower in style and more reductive than anything that had come before it. Yet Mustaine had left the thrash metal Beatles, and the event has cast its shadow. By any measure except this one, Mustaine's career arc has been spectacular, his successes hard earned, his artistry acclaimed by fans, industry and peers. And it all started with this 1985 release...

WHAT DAVE MUSTAINE SAYS
"I am just as much amazed at the music we made as I am at the pure fact that we survived it all..."

ANY EXTRAS?
To the remixed and remastered original album Mustaine has added breakneck live versions of seven songs from a VHS tape that he found in his attic, the 1984 three-track demo for the sessions, and a fresh realisation of the album cover he conceived back in '85. The package also includes archive photos and classic flyers.

HIGHLIGHTS
'Killing Is My Business...', which was recorded for either $8,000 or $12,000 depending on which version of the story you hear, remains Mustaine's fresh-out-of-jail calling card. Its jagged stylings and antsy aggression still retain the ability to transport the listener back down the decades. Here was heavy metal's flip side, cut in LA – just like Mötley Crüe and Van Halen – but sounding nothing like either of those huge bands. Instead, this record and its successor 'Peace Sells...' (along with early recordings by the likes of Exodus, Slayer, Anthrax and Metallica) very quickly offered an alternative world of sound and imagery that felt logical, progressive, and filled with boundless energy and excitement. If you're not playing some sort of air guitar when you listen to 'The Skull Beneath The Skin' or 'Mechanix', check your pulse – you may well be dead...

Jon Hotten

THE INSIDE TRACK

Deep Purple Mark II shot in Denmark on 2 March 1972. L-R: Roger Glover (bass), Ian Gillan (vocals), Ian Paice (drums), Jon Lord (keyboards), Ritchie Blackmore (guitar)

LA ROCKER **LITA FORD** LETS YOU IN ON THE VERY BEST WAYS TO ENJOY THE MAJESTY OF **DEEP PURPLE**

"I WAS 11 YEARS old when I first discovered Deep Purple, which was a truly revelatory moment for me. I'm not entirely sure, because it was a pretty long time ago now, but I think the first Purple album I bought was 'Made In Japan'. I would sit in my room with my record player turned up high and listen to as many of their albums as I could get my hands on... 'Machine Head', 'Burn', 'Made In Japan'. Later on I'd learn to play lots of those songs.

"AS SOON as I started playing guitar myself, I was immediately blown away by Ritchie Blackmore's technique. What he was doing, particularly on 'Highway Star', was incredible, and once I'd heard that song I was determined to learn the solo. It was real a monster to get to grips with, but it was worth the effort in the end. After all, it got me my gig in The Runaways!

"THE FIRST band I ever saw live was Black Sabbath and that was a truly life-changing experience. But I did see Purple not much later when a friend and I hitch-hiked to the California Jam at the Ontario Motor Speedway in April 1974. I was only 15 at the time and I lied to my parents that I was staying with my friend, while she told *her* parents that she was staying over at my house. I wrote about the experience in my book, *Living Like A Runaway*. Emerson, Lake and Palmer headlined that show and Black Sabbath and Black Oak Arkansas were also on the bill [The Eagles, Rare Earth, Earth Wind & Fire, and Seals & Crofts completed the line-up].

"We didn't actually pay to get in, but found a hole in a fence and crawled through it and onto the site. We got to the stage for Purple's set and ending up standing right in front of Ritchie, which was amazing. It was the night he tried to shove his Stratocaster right through the lens of a camera that was filming the show. The cameraman must have got too close and had started ticking Ritchie off. Have I ever felt like doing that at any time? For sure. Ritchie became a huge influence on me from that day on, as much for his attitude as for his playing.

"WHEN WE first started The Runaways everyone had a hero that they emulated. Our vocalist Cherie Currie was a huge David Bowie fan and she had that Bowie haircut – only blonde, not red. Joan Jett wanted to be Suzi Quatro, and I was a big Blackmore fan. But I remember our manager, Kim Fowley, telling us one day at rehearsals [Lita imitates Fowley's infamous, confrontational shouty style], "YOU ARE NOT DAVID BOWIE! YOU ARE NOT SUZI QUATRO! AND YOU ARE NOT RITCHIE BLACKMORE! YOU ARE YOURSELVES! YOU NEED TO DEVELOP YOUR OWN STYLES." He was the drill sergeant. And I listened!

"I CAN'T honestly remember the last time I saw Deep Purple live, but I've seen pretty much all of the band members playing in one band or another at various times over the years. I actually opened for Rainbow on the very first European tour I ever did as a solo artist back in 1983. Joe Lynn Turner was the band's vocalist on that tour and I saw him again at a festival not too long ago. That brought back some great memories! I think it's huge that Ritchie has resurrected Rainbow now. As far as I'm concerned he really needed to get back to doing the rock stuff again."

THE ALL-TIME CLASSIC – 'MACHINE HEAD' (1972)

"It's really difficult for me to make a choice between 'Machine Head' with Ian Gillan on vocals, or 'Burn' with David Coverdale and Glenn Hughes, because they really are neck and neck. They're both equally awesome albums, but if push comes to shove I'll go with 'Machine Head', because to my mind that album is every guitar player's dream. Ritchie is just incredible from start to finish and the way he constantly battles it out with Jon Lord's keyboards is staggering. It's like they're locked in a kind of musical duel to the death!

"I'd also like to give a shout-out to 'Perfect Strangers', released in 1984, because it was another great album, marking the return of the Mark II line-up as Ritchie reunited with Ian Gillan, Jon Lord, Roger Glover and Ian Paice. That reunion was an awesome event in itself. But at the end of the day, the all-time classic album for me still has to be 'Machine Head'."

THE ONE FOR CONNOISSEURS – 'STORMBRINGER' (1974)

"Although I consider the Deep Purple Mark II line-up to be my all-time favourite, the 'Stormbringer' album – the band's second release with David Coverdale on vocals and Glenn Hughes on bass – is absolutely spot on. I don't actually recall buying it when it first came out, but I think the reason I became so partial to it later on was because I really started to appreciate Glenn's vocal contributions on the record. I don't think many people realise how much Glenn sings lead on this album, but whenever I listen to 'Stormbringer' I can pick out his awesome contributions every time."

THE ONE TO AVOID – "THERE ISN'T ONE!"

"That's a really difficult question, because there's nothing the band has recorded where I'd go so far as to say it should be avoided. I guess what I can say is that while I have great respect for the all of the different line-ups of the band, because I'm such a Blackmore fan I'm always going to say that Deep Purple is really only Deep Purple when he's in it. All of the guys who've ever been in the band are talented players, and [current guitarist] Steve Morse is a seriously good guitarist. But I'm not sure they should be calling themselves Deep Purple without Ritchie. To my mind the band as it exists today is a different band. For me, it just doesn't fit the name."

THE BEST BOOTLEG – "THERE ISN'T ONE!"

"I don't usually listen to bootlegs. I love the official releases, but to be honest bootleg recordings generally just aren't that good. I think I was put off bootlegs because there are so many Runaways bootlegs out there. They seem to turn up all the time, but I don't listen to any of them. Some people probably think they're fun to listen to, but I'm not one of them! They're not my thing. I know Cherie Currie got her hands on a bootleg she liked so much she actually made copies, then sold it at an event we did at $20 a pop! That was smart. That's bootlegging the bootleggers!"

THE BEST FILM OR VIDEO – *CALIFORNIA JAM 1974* (2016)

"It's personal to me because of all the memories I have of actually attending that show, so obviously *California Jam 1974* is my choice here. It was such a huge event in itself, and there was such a unique vibe to that show, that it was special to be there. I think some of that attitude still comes across in the footage from the show. It's kind of weird to think of how different things were back then. There was no unofficial filming to speak of, no YouTube. I really only had my memories of the concert until this DVD came out, so to be able to watch it this way now is great."

Photo: Getty Images/Jorgen Angel/Redferns; Julia Goode

THE INSIDE TRACK

Purple performing for TV in 1971

THE RARITY – A PERSONAL MEETING WITH RITCHIE

"Rather than picking an album I'll go for a rare event that's very close to my heart – the time I visited Ritchie at his house in Hollywood many years ago! I asked Kim Fowley to give Ritchie my phone number and have him call me. Ritchie did and invited me over. He was a gentleman. Watching him play the cello was one of the most incredible moments of my life. We played guitar together and he taught me this minor scale he called 'The Snake Charmer', which was a guitar piece that was both sexy and nasty at the same time. Before I left he gave me a gold ring that was shaped like an owl. When I left his house I was on such a high from jamming with him that I hit this guy coming up the road on a motorcycle with his girlfriend on the back. Thankfully they were OK, but the girl did bitch at me because she'd got oil on her jeans!"

Ritchie Blackmore at the Sunset Marquis Hotel, Hollywood, California, early 1970s

Photos: Getty Images/Ron Howard/Redferns; Getty Images/Brad Elterman/FilmMagic; Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns

LITA FORD'S DEEP PURPLE PLAYLIST

'SPEED KING'
(from 'Deep Purple In Rock', 1970)

"Everybody knows that this is one of *the* great Deep Purple songs from one of *the* great Deep Purple albums. The vocals are amazing and the tempo really gets you going... it takes off like a bullet from a gun."

'CHILD IN TIME'
(from 'Deep Purple In Rock', 1970)

"This song features some of the most amazing vocals I've ever heard in my life. It's just incredible. But what's even better is that Ian Gillan could pull it all off live as well. He could always prove that there was no doctoring going on in the studio."

'HIGHWAY STAR'
(from 'Machine Head', 1972)

"I've been thinking about playing this number live myself, but we don't have a keyboard player at the moment – and extra musicians cost money! But what a brilliant song. I love the way the guitar and keyboards feel like they're fighting it out to take charge!"

'BURN'
(from 'Burn', 1974)

"What can I say about 'Burn' that hasn't been said already? The way that David Coverdale and Glenn Hughes work together vocally on this song is just out of this world. It's two guys at the absolute top of their game. I've played 'Burn' live on the odd occasion and it always gives me a thrill to rip this one up."

'SMOKE ON THE WATER'
(from 'Machine Head', 1972)

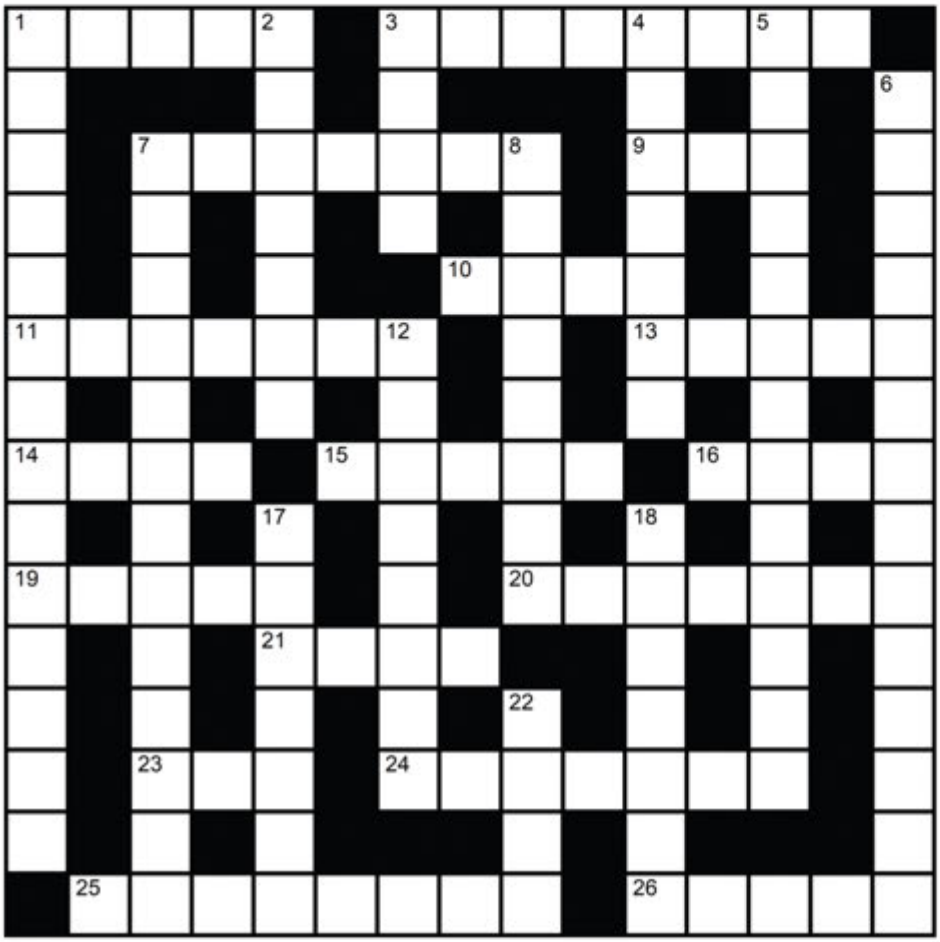
"That song is life changing. A lot of bass players – mine included – started their careers learning how to play 'Smoke On The Water'! It's an all-time rock classic and always will be."

'MISTREATED'
(from 'Burn', 1974)

"This one just has to be on the list! It's slow, it's sexy, it has a real bad-to-the-bone guitar riff and is one of my favourite ever songs. We actually played it live in 2014 at the Whisky in Hollywood with Glenn Hughes on vocals. I couldn't breathe after the song was over and had this feeling that my feet weren't even touching the stage!"

CROSSWORD

Time to exercise your great big brain and see if you can complete the great big *Rock Candy* crossword



3 ACROSS: DREAM THEATER

9 ACROSS: CHEAP TRICK

6 DOWN: KISS

22 DOWN: BLACK SABBATH

ACROSS

1 There's some bad spelling from Zeppelin and AC/DC when they talk about Love or Rosie. (5)
3 Surname of the guitarist who co-founded Dream Theater in 1985. (8)
7 Blackfoot wished you a good one on 1981's 'Marauder' album. (7)
9 1988 saw Cheap Trick sitting in the '--- Of Luxury'. (3)
10 Sadly departed Warrant singer, Jani ----. (4)
11 Track from Wishbone Ash's 1976 album 'New England', '------- Bound'. (7)
13 The first word of the most Zep-like track on the 1987 'Whitesnake' album. (5)
14 G N'R bassist who shares his name with a beer from *The Simpsons*. (4)
15 Heart's 1975 debut album, 'Dreamboat -----'. (5)
16 Metallica told you to '---- your master' in 1986. (4)
19 Anthrax song from the 'Volume 8: The Threat Is Real' album, 'Born Again -----'. (5)
20 Why Noddy Holder won't laugh at you when you boo hoo hoo. 'Coz - --- ---'. (1,3,3)
21 Foghat love a slow one. (4)
23 Saxon's ode to life on two wheels, 'Motorcycle ---'. (3)
24 Surname of bassist who's played with Flotsam And Jetsam, Metallica, and Voivod. (7)
25 Dokken's 1985 album, '----- Lock And ---'. (5,3)
26 Ace Frehley goes all atmospheric on his 1978 solo album. (5)

DOWN

1 Cinderella need to get some thermal undies on to prepare for their chilly second album. (4,4,6)
2 The song that follows 'Funeral' on King Diamond's 1987 concept album, 'Abigail'. (7)
3 British AOR band fronted by both Bernie Shaw and Robin McAuley, Grand ----. (4)
4 'What's The ------- Part Of Your Body?' pondered Frank Zappa and his Mothers Of Invention. (7)
5 Band featuring vocalist Rod Evans who released their debut album on the Capricorn label in 1972. (7,6)
6 The opening track on Kiss's 1977 'Love Gun' album. (1,5,4,4)
7 Guitarist who played in Cacophony before joining Megadeth. (5,8)
8 Zeppelin get Physical... (8)
12 The rock manager dad of Ozzy's wife Sharon Osbourne. (3,5)
17 Joe Elliott's ode to an odd 'Lady' on Leppard's 'High 'N' Dry' album. (7)
18 Second album from the Liverpool rockers fronted by Dave Lloyd. (4,3)
22 A track featured on Black Sabbath's 'Heaven And Hell' album, 'Walk ----'. (4)

For answers go to our website www.rockcandymag.com

Crossword compiled by Jason Arnopp

Photos: Getty Images/Bob Berg; Getty Images/Ebet Roberts/Redferns; Getty Images/Koh Hasebe/Shinko Music; Getty Images/Larry Hulst/Michael Ochs Archives

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NUTZ - 'HARD NUTZ'

NUTZ - 'S/T'

NUTZ - 'NUTZ TOO...'

MORNINGSTAR - 'S/T'

MORNINGSTAR - 'VENUS'

RIOT - 'FIRE DOWN UNDER'

SHADOW KING - 'S/T'

D'MOLLS - 'S/T'

MALICE - 'LICENSE TO KILL'

SHAW BLADES - 'HALLUCINATION'

VALENTINE - 'S/T'

ATOMIC OPERA
'FOR MADMEN ONLY'

GARY WRIGHT
'THE DREAMWEAVER'

GARY WRIGHT
'THE LIGHT OF SMILES'

ST. PARADISE - 'S/T'

STONE FURY - 'BURNS LIKE A STAR'

JETBOY - 'FEEL THE SHAKE'

DOKKEN - 'BEAST FROM THE EAST'

ALANNAH MYLES - 'S/T'

BAD ENGLISH - 'S/T'

MAHOGANY RUSH - 'LIVE'

FRANK MARINO - 'WHAT'S NEXT'

FRANK MARINO
'THE POWER OF ROCK AND ROLL'

FRANK MARINO - 'JUGGERNAUT'

LILLIAN AXE - 'S/T'

LILLIAN AXE - 'LOVE + WAR'

WARRANT - 'CHERRY PIE'

WARRANT - 'DIRTY ROTTEN
FILTHY STINKING RICH'

CREED - 'S/T'

SALTY DOG
'EVERY DOG HAS IT'S DAY'

COMING SOON

HOTEL - 'S/T'

HOTEL - 'HALF MOON SIDER'

Y&T - 'EARTHSHAKER'

Y&T - 'BLACK TIGER'

Y&T - 'MEAN STREAK'

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